棺担ぎのクロ。

懐中旅話 1

～カイチュウタビノワ～

「一緒に来るかい？
外の世界へ　それを探しに。」

きゆづきさとこ

Book Design : Kianachi-Graphics www.kianachi.com

MANGA TIME KR COMICS

棺担ぎのクロ。 懐中旅話 1

きゆづきさとこ

芳文社

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C9979 ¥819E

雑誌　52200－68

定価：本体819円＋税

黒い旅人と白い子供達の
ちょっとかわった旅のはじまり。

大きな棺を背負った旅人クロとこうもりのセン。ふたりはどこから来て、
どこへ行くのか？　そして背中の棺の意味は…？
新鋭・きゆづきさとこが紡ぎ出す、これぞ新感覚ストーリー4コマ!!

棺担ぎのクロ。

懐中旅話

～カイチュウタビノワ～

1

まゆづきさとこ

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shoulder a coffin , "kuro"

Satoko Kiyuduki , houbunsha

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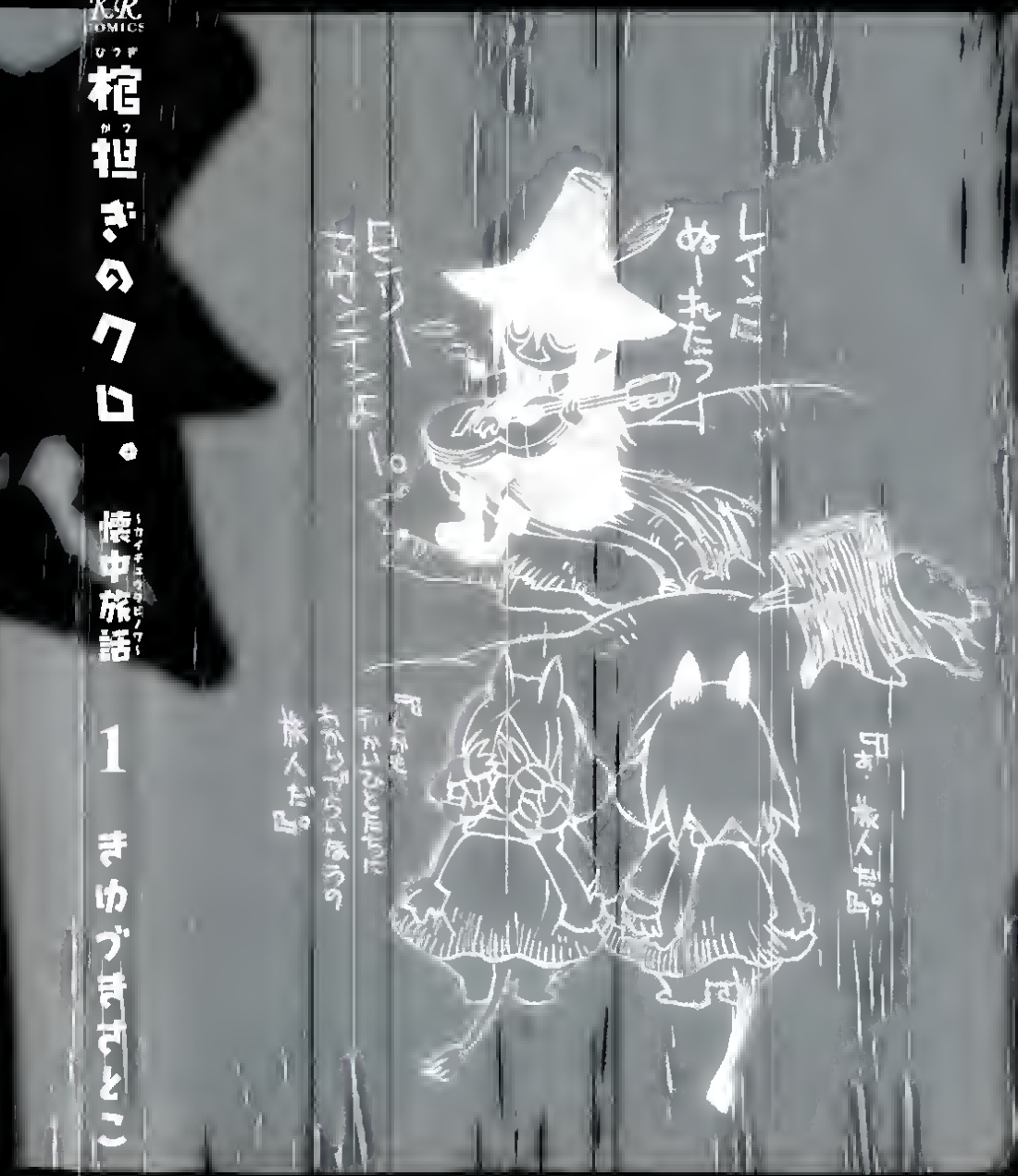
MANGA TIME KR COMICS

棺担ぎのクロ。

懐中旅話（カイチュウタビノワ）

1

きゆづきさとこ



芳文社

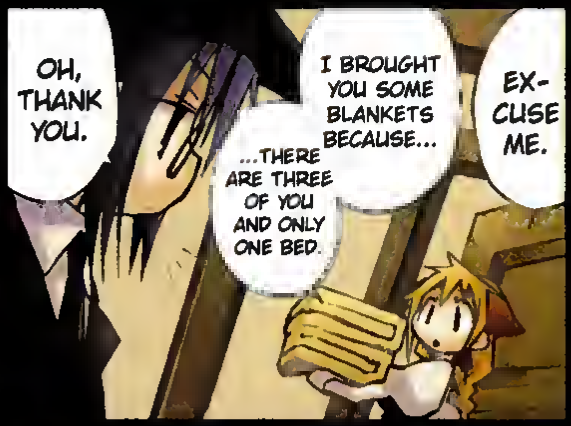
Yet, the troveler is in the midst of her long, long journey...

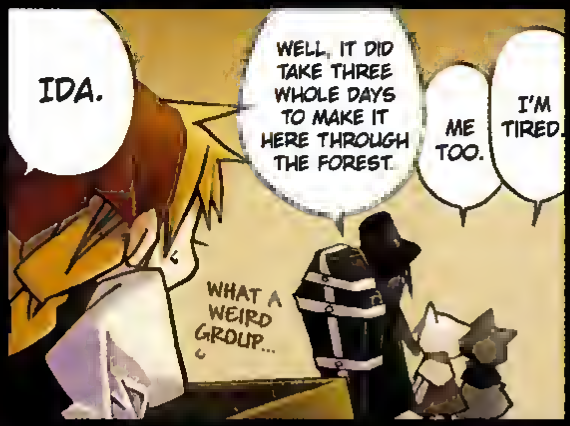
And this story will be but o smoll port of thot sojourn.

Characters

Shoulder-a-Coffin Kuro

IS THIS THE LOCAL INN?
YES! WELCOME...
I'M A NORMAL GIRL WHO WORKS AT AN INN.
I'M IDA.
...WAS A MYSTERIOUS AND PECULIAR...
...TRAVELER.
THE PERSON I MET THAT DAY...
Shoulder-a-Coffin
KURO
IS IT FOR... FOUR PEOPLE?
NO... THERE'S NO ONE IN THIS COFFIN.
A COFFIN!?
OH. OKAY ...
I WANT TO STAY THE NIGHT.

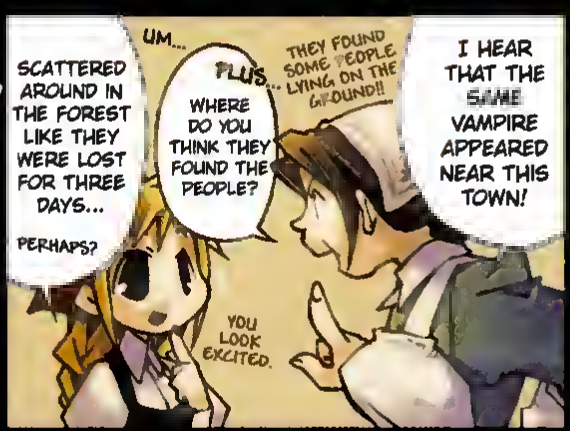

OH, THANK YOU.
I BROUGHT YOU SOME BLANKETS BECAUSE...
...THERE ARE THREE OF YOU AND ONLY ONE BED.
EX-CUSE ME.

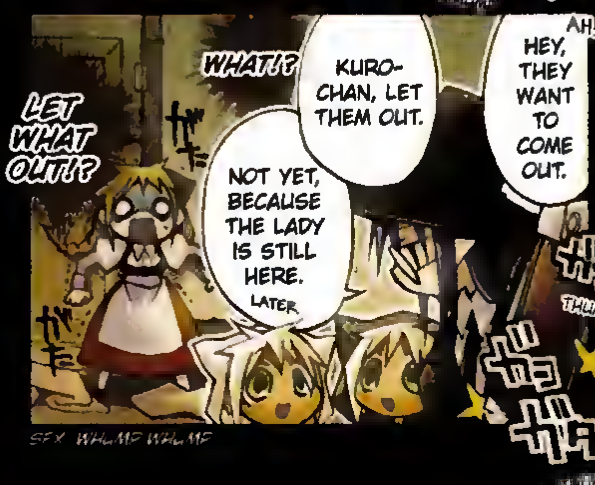

IDA.
WELL, IT DID TAKE THREE WHOLE DAYS TO MAKE IT HERE THROUGH THE FOREST.
ME TOO.
I'M TIRED.
WHAT A WEIRD GROUP...

I WONDER IF SHE'S GOING TO TAKE THE BED.
SURE.
PLEASE GIVE THEM TO THE KIDS.

OH.
I THINK I HEARD SOME TRAVELERS MENTION IT.
YES, MA'AM?
HAVE YOU HEARD THE RUMORS ABOUT A VAMPIRE?

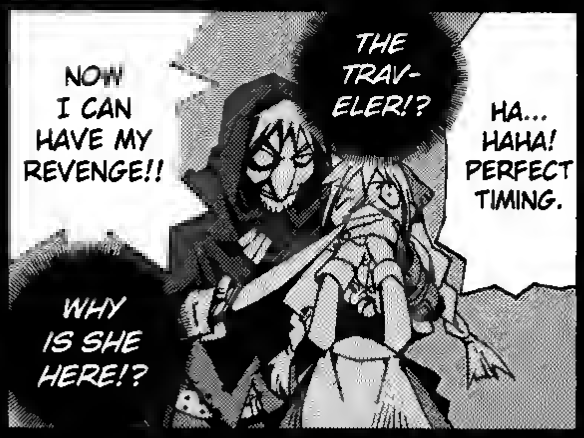
OH.
WHUMP
ガタ
ガタ


UM...
SCATTERED AROUND IN THE FOREST LIKE THEY WERE LOST FOR THREE DAYS...
PERHAPS?
PLUS...
WHERE DO YOU THINK THEY FOUND THE PEOPLE?
THEY FOUND SOME PEOPLE LYING ON THE GROUND!!
I HEAR THAT THE SAME VAMPIRE APPEARED NEAR THIS TOWN!
YOU LOOK EXCITED.

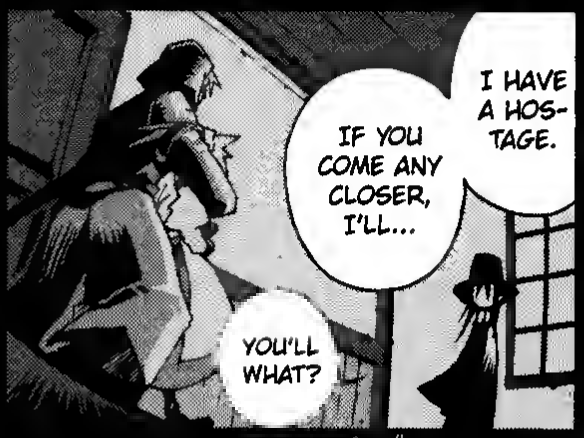

AH.
HEY, THEY WANT TO COME OUT.
KURO-CHAN, LET THEM OUT.
WHAT!?
LET WHAT OUT!?
NOT YET, BECAUSE THE LADY IS STILL HERE.
LATER.
THUMP
WHUMP
SFX WHUMP WHUMP

N-N-N-NO!!
!?
...ARE YOU THE VAM-PIRE!?
...
OH!

IT'S BOTHERING ME. I CAN'T REST.
CLACK CLACK
WHAT'S WRONG, IDA? YOU'RE PALE AS A GHOST.
Y-Y-Y-YES! I'M FINE.
COULD IT BE? COULD IT REALLY BE!?
I'LL BE FINE!
I'VE GOT A CROSS AND GARLIC READY.
I JUST NEED TO PEEK INTO THE ROOM AND CHECK...
COULD THAT TRAVELER BE THE RUMORED VAMPIRE?
IF SO...
LET'S SEE... IT WAS THE ROOM IN THE BACK.
THAT'S WHERE THEY'RE STAYING...
...SHE MIGHT BE AFTER SOMEONE STAYING HERE!
.....
!
REACH
IDA, YOU CAN CALL IT A DAY. GO REST.
BITTEN!?
OH, YEAH. YOU HAVE RED DOTS ON YOUR NECK AND ARMS.
DARN IT. I WAS BITTEN AT WORK TODAY.
FLINCH
MOSQUITOS?
CRAAASH

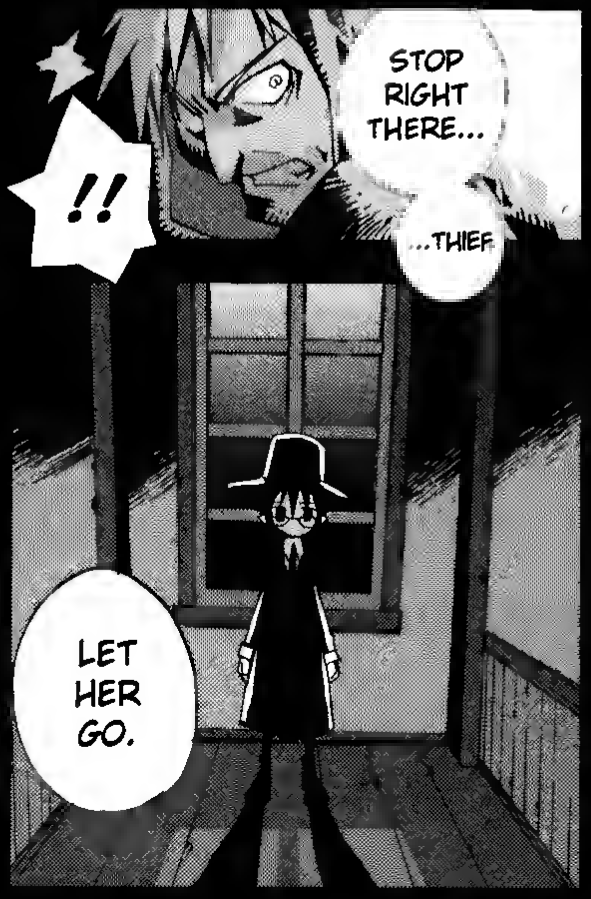

NOW I CAN HAVE MY REVENGE!!
THE TRAV-ELER!?
HA... HAHA! PERFECT TIMING.
WHY IS SHE HERE!?

ガシャ
CLANG
KYAAA ...!
SHUT UP!! DON'T MAKE A SOUND!


I HAVE A HOS-TAGE.
IF YOU COME ANY CLOSER, I'LL...
YOU'LL WHAT?

WHO IS THIS!?
...A MAN!?
YOU WORK AT THIS INN, RIGHT?
TELL ME WHERE YOU KEEP THE CASH!

WHOOSH
WHOOSH
WHOOSH
WHAT THE WH-HECK IS THIS!?
!?


!!
STOP RIGHT THERE...
...THIEF
LET HER GO.

SCREE
I WON'T...
SCREE
...LET YOU LIVE THIS TIME.

THE BAT TALKED!
WHA!?
we're not monsters.
Calm down, girly.
FLAP FLAP

SFX SCREECH SCREECH
A-
ARR-GHH-HHH!!

OH...
WERE THESE BATS HIDING IN YOUR LUGGAGE?
THEY WON'T HURT YOU.
THESE BATS ARE MY FRIENDS.
BUT I GUESS THEY STARTLED YOU IN MY ROOM EARLIER.

SCREECH
OH...
OH MY GOSH.
SCREECH

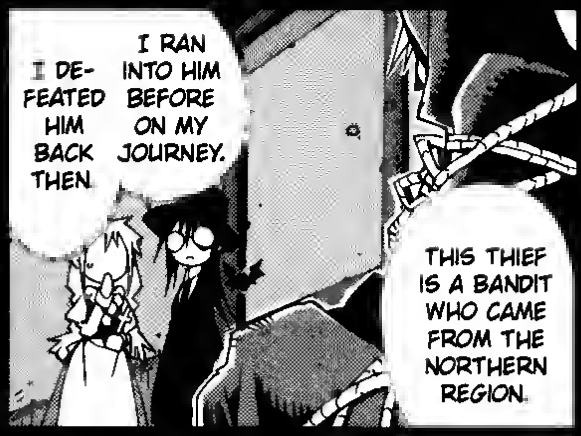
SHE probably caused you trouble cos of it.
Sorry about that. Kuro doesn't explain anything unless it's really necessary.

PHEW.
NO Problem.
THANKS FOR THE HELP, SEN.
FLAP
FLAP

...THAT'S WHY I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO HANDLE IT.
I WOULD'VE explained everything and then some. girly...
SHE SHOULD'VE just let me HANDLE it from the start.

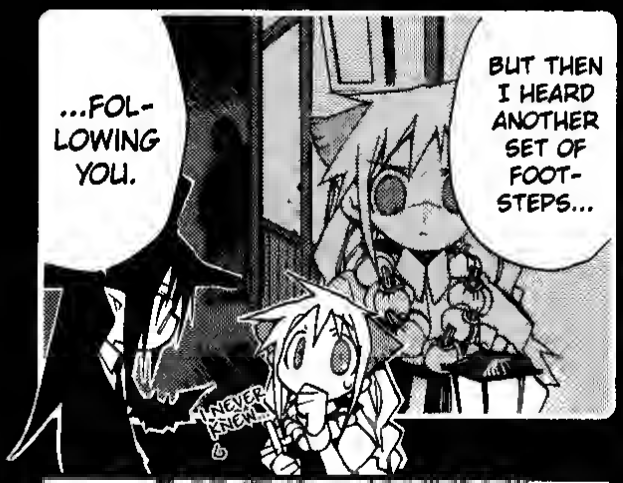
FLINCH
EE-
EEK!
ARE YOU OKAY?
I THINK SHE'S more terrified than before. Kuro.

HOW DID YOU KNOW I WAS BEING ATTACKED?
UM, I'M CURIOUS ABOUT ONE THING.
CHIRP CHIRP CHIRP
OH, THAT.


I RAN INTO HIM BEFORE ON MY JOURNEY.
I DE-FEATED HIM BACK THEN.
THIS THIEF IS A BANDIT WHO CAME FROM THE NORTHERN REGION.

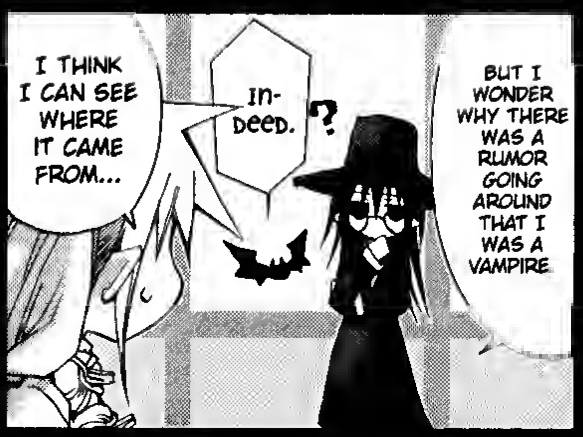
I WOKE UP TO THE SOUND OF FOOT-STEPS.
CLOP
CLOP
AT FIRST, I THOUGHT YOU WERE PATROLLING.

I'M SORRY. I CAUSED YOU SO MUCH TROUBLE.
I DON'T KNOW IF HE GOT KICKED OUT OF HIS GROUP...
...BUT HE MUST'VE FOLLOWED US...


...FOL-LOWING YOU.
BUT THEN I HEARD ANOTHER SET OF FOOT-STEPS...
I NEVER KNEW...

...KUTO GOT MISTAKEN AS THE CULPRIT LOTS OF TIMES.
BECAUSE THAT GUY ACTED UP WHEREVER WE WENT...
WELL, THAT CAN'T BE HELPED.

ACK!
I FOR-GOT!!
YEAH, THE ACCESSORIES ON YOUR NECK AND IN YOUR HAND... ARE THEY IN?
BY THE WAY...
...I'M CURI-OUS TOO.

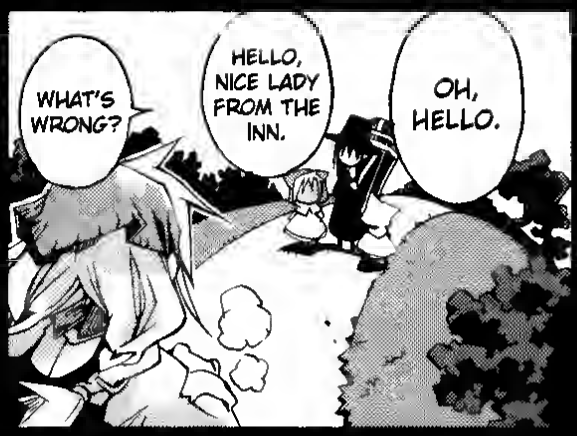

I THINK I CAN SEE WHERE IT CAME FROM...
IN-DEED.
?
BUT I WONDER WHY THERE WAS A RUMOR GOING AROUND THAT I WAS A VAMPIRE.

I HAVE TO PREPARE FOR MY DEPARTURE.
YOU'VE DONE ENOUGH FOR US.
SURE.
I'M SORRY, BUT CAN I LEAVE IT TO YOU TWO TO HANDLE THE BANDIT FROM HERE?
WELL, I WAS SLEEPING ON THE FLOOR, SO I COULD HEAR BETTER.
?
OH, UM... ANYWAY, YOU HAVE REALLY GOOD HEARING.
HEY, LOOK.
OH. THANK YOU.
WE BROUGHT IT FOR YOU.
ARE YOU PROUD OF US?
KURO-CHAN, YOUR STUFF.
THERE'S KURO-CHA.
OH, FOUND YOU.
NIJUKU, SANJU.
WHISPER
HOW CREEPY.
MAYBE SHE'S INVOLVED IN SOMETHING FISHY.
WHISPER
THAT TRAV-ELER'S CARRYING A COFFIN.
WHISPER
!
HUH?
BUT WE DECIDED THAT THE WINNER OF JANKEN WOULD GET THE BED. REMEMBER?
I CAR-RIED YOU GUYS THERE.
WHY WERE WE ON THE BED WHEN WE WOKE UP?
OR MAYBE THAT TRAV-ELER'S THE RUMORED VAMPIRE.
AHAHAHA
.....
THAT BED DIDN'T FIT MY BODY.
IT'S OKAY.

...LEAVING BEHIND THE MYSTERY OF THE TRAVELER'S IDENTITY...
AND SO THEY LEFT TO CONTINUE THEIR JOURNEY...

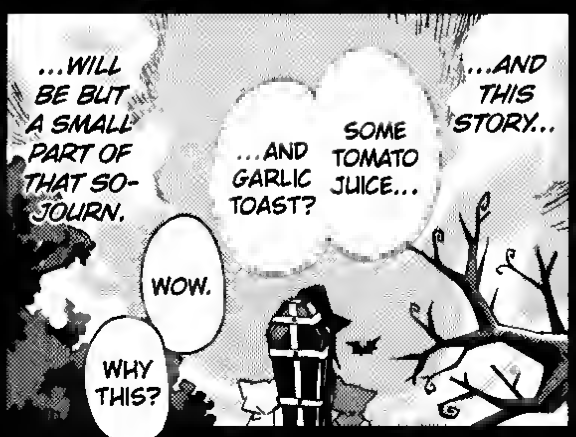
TRAV-ELER-SAN!
...WAIT!

...I NEVER SAW THOSE TRAV-ELERS AGAIN.
WHAT DID SHE GIVE US?
HEY, KURO-CHA.
HUH?
SNACKS?
AFTER THE DAY THEY TOOK OFF...


WHAT'S WRONG?
HELLO, NICE LADY FROM THE INN.
OH, HELLO.

RUSTLE
...SHE'S IN THE MIDST OF HER LONG, LONG JOUR-NEY...
LET'S SEE...
YET, SOME-HOW, I KNOW...
HURRY! HURRY!

...WANTED TO THANK YOU AND APOLOGIZE TOO.
UM, I MADE THIS.
THIS IS ALL I CAN DO.
?

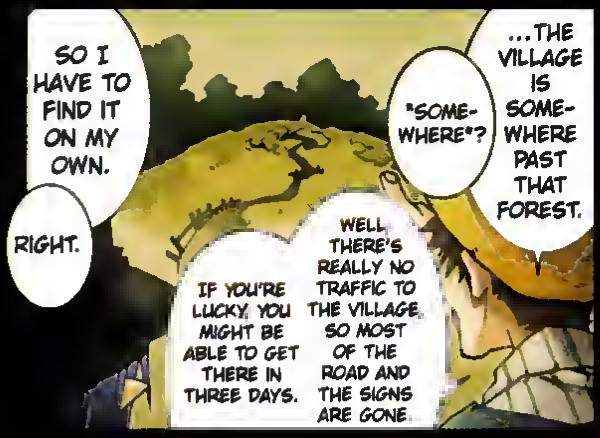

...WILL BE BUT A SMALL PART OF THAT SO-JOURN.
...AND GARLIC TOAST?
SOME TOMATO JUICE...
...AND THIS STORY...
WOW.
WHY THIS?

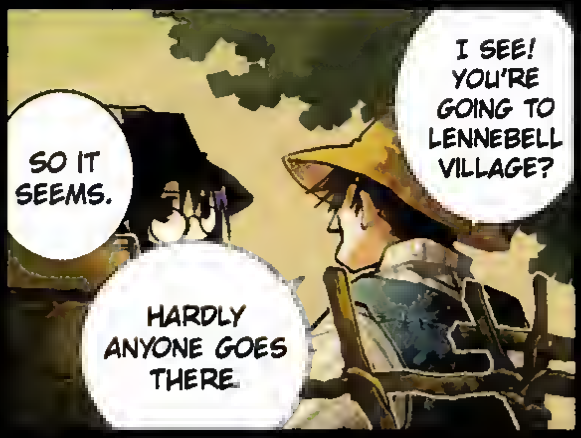
.....
THANK YOU.

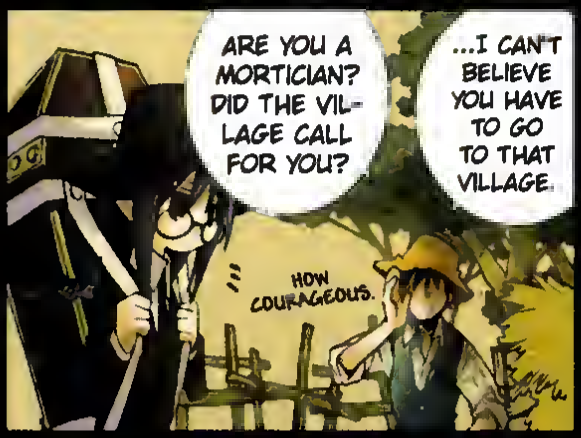
The little girls asked the traveler dressed in black,

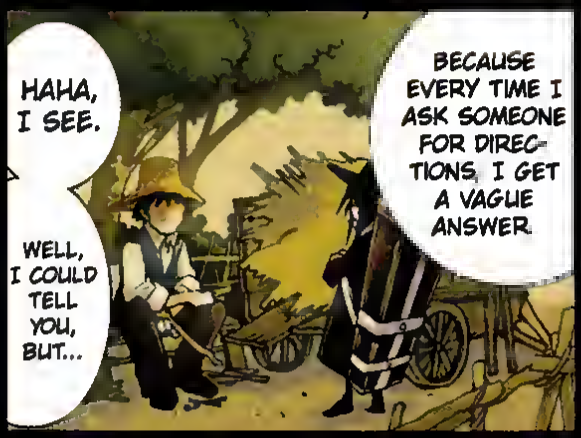
"You're all dressed in black, Traveler-san. Who are you?"

LOOK.
SOME-ONE'S THERE.
ONII-SAN, WHO ARE YOU?
WHERE DID YOU COME FROM?
I CAME FROM OVER THERE.
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
OVER HERE.
I WONDER WHAT HE DOES?
NOT SURE...


SO I HAVE TO FIND IT ON MY OWN.
RIGHT.
"SOMEWHERE"?
...THE VILLAGE IS SOMEWHERE PAST THAT FOREST.
IF YOU'RE LUCKY, YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO GET THERE IN THREE DAYS.
WELL, THERE'S REALLY NO TRAFFIC TO THE VILLAGE, SO MOST OF THE ROAD AND THE SIGNS ARE GONE.


I SEE! YOU'RE GOING TO LENNEBELL VILLAGE?
SO IT SEEMS.
HARDLY ANYONE GOES THERE.

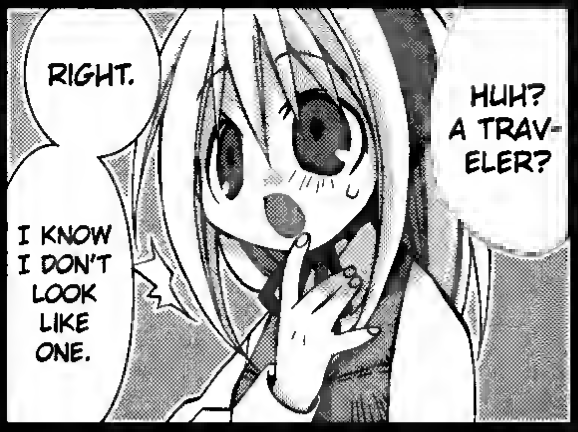

ARE YOU A MORTICIAN? DID THE VILLAGE CALL FOR YOU?
...I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU HAVE TO GO TO THAT VILLAGE.
HOW COURAGEOUS.


HAHA, I SEE.
WELL, I COULD TELL YOU, BUT...
BECAUSE EVERY TIME I ASK SOMEONE FOR DIRECTIONS, I GET A VAGUE ANSWER.

NO...
...I'M A TRAVELER.
AND THIS...
...COFFIN'S FOR ME.

WAKES UP
AH!?
.....
WHAT SHOULD I DO?
I WANDERED TOO FAR FROM THE VILLAGE.
HUH?
WHAT AM I...
A DREAM?
HOW ARE YOU FEELING?
OH, YOU WOKE UP.
You fainted the instant you saw us.
THERE IS A "FOREST DEVIL" LIVING THERE.
LISTEN, NOELLE. DON'T GO INTO THE FOREST ALONE.
I REMEMBER DAD USED TO TELL ME WHEN I WAS LITTLE...
...ARE THOSE MY ONLY OPTIONS?
I DON'T REALLY UNDER-STAND...
OR AM I ALREADY DEAD AND THIS IS HELL!?
OH NO!? ARE YOU GOING TO KILL ME NOW!?
RUSTLE
AND CHILDREN WHO GO INTO THE FOREST ARE KILLED AND STUFFED INTO IT.
THE DEVIL'S DRESSED IN BLACK AND CAR-RIES A COFFIN.

BY THE WAY...
...WE WERE LOOK-ING FOR LENNEBEL VILLAGE.
OH. MY VILLAGE?


HUH? A TRAV-ELER?
RIGHT.
I KNOW I DON'T LOOK LIKE ONE.

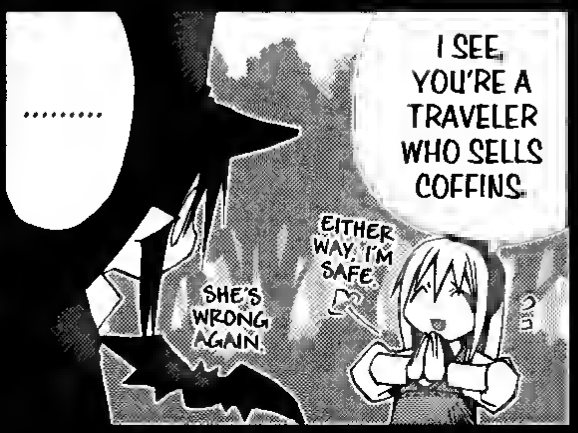
So, girly. you're a resident of that village?
YES.
I CAME INTO THE FOREST TO PICK SOME BERRIES.

Just now the man who gave us directions thought you were a mortician.
Obviously. Travelers don't usually carry around a coffin.
SHUT UP.

Aren't you glad we found her?
YEAH. NOW WE CAN GET TO THE VILLAGE WITHOUT GETTING LOST.
THUMP
ぱふ。

I'M...
...SOOOO SORRY THAT I MISTOOK YOU FOR A...
IT'S OKAY.
I'M USED TO IT.

DRIP DRIP
たら たら
DRIP DRIP
たら たら


I SEE. YOU'RE A TRAVELER WHO SELLS COFFINS.
.....
EITHER WAY. I'M SAFE.
SHE'S WRONG AGAIN.

THE SUN'S STARTING TO SET.
WE SHOULD HURRY.
WHOOSH!
THE FOREST GOT DARKER.
WHOOSH!
ARE YOU LOST TOO?
OH, BUT...
...DON'T WORRY!
I KNEW IT...
I MARKED THE WAY AS I WALKED.
OH! GOOD JOB.
HOLD MY HAND SO YOU DON'T GET LOST.
OH...
.....
BLUSH
I USED BREAD FROM BREAK-FAST.
I TORE IT AND LEFT A TRAIL.
JUST SO YOU KNOW, I'M A GIRL.
EH!?
OH!! I'M SOR-RY!!
BLUSH
I THINK YOU COULD JUST TELL HER THAT WE CAN'T GET HOME.
ONCE UPON A TIME, THERE WAS A FAIRY TALE ABOUT A HOUSE MADE OUT OF GINGER-BREAD.
OH, I SEE. WELL, LET ME TELL YOU A STORY.
SFX RUSTLE RUSTLE

MAYBE IT'S DANGEROUS TO WALK BLINDLY IN THE DARK.
IT'S ALMOST PITCH BLACK.

OH, I'M JUST A LITTLE TIRED AND HUNGRY.
ARE YOU OKAY?
HEE HEE!
RUSTLE

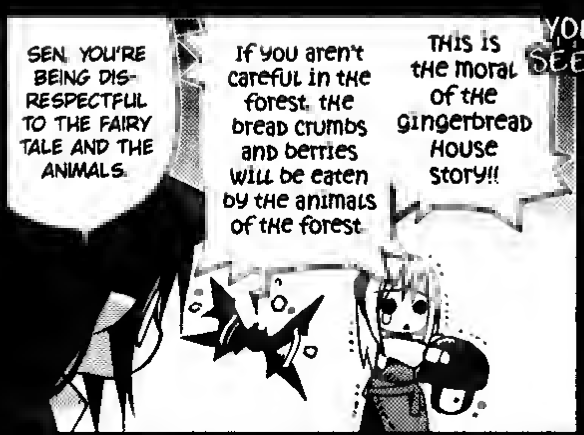
BECAUSE NOW, I CAN USE SEN WITHOUT FEELING BAD.
I'M USING MY TRUMP CARD TO FIND THE VILLAGE.
TRAVELER-SAN? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
HEY! THOUGH YOU'RE RIGHT.
CLUNK

I HAVE THE BERRIES I PICKED.
I KNOW!

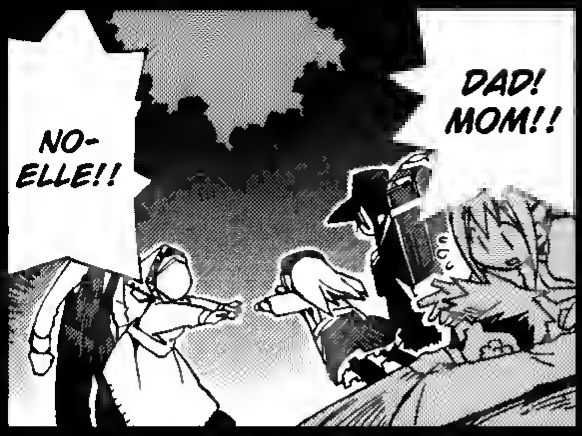
YES?
OH, BY THE WAY. I NEED TO REMIND YOU.
DON'T FAINT AGAIN.
SFX: CLIP CLIP

OH...

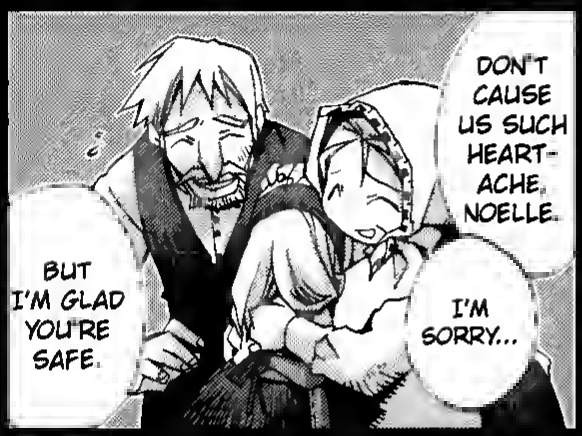
はさはさばさはさ


SEN, YOU'RE BEING DISRESPECTFUL TO THE FAIRY TALE AND THE ANIMALS.
If you aren't careful in the forest, the bread crumbs and berries will be eaten by the animals of the forest.
THIS IS the moral of the gingerbread house story!!
YOU SEE...

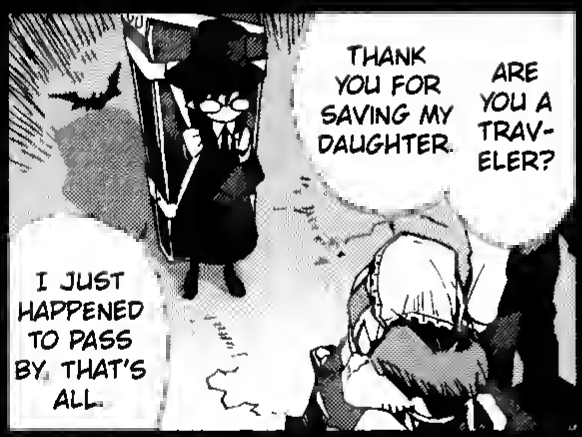
.....
NO.
I WON'T.
バサ
FLAP
EEE-EEK.
バサ
FLAP
THESE ARE ALL OF YOUR FRIENDS, RIGHT?
BE-CAUSE...
...THERE'S NO WAY SOMEONE WITH SUCH WARM HANDS...
SMILE
...COULD BE A DEVIL.
YOU CAN BE HONEST.
I'M USED TO PEOPLE BEING SCARED OF ME.
OH, UM...
ARE YOU FRIGHT-ENED?
Hey.
.....
I found some lights in that direction.
WE FOUND IT 'COS IT'S DARK
WOBBLE WOBBLE
WHAT IF...
...I LIED ABOUT BEING A TRAV-ELER...
...AND I'M REALLY THE DEVIL WHO LIVES IN THIS FOREST?
.....?
You have a weird look on your face.
What were you guys doing when I was gone!?
WOULD..
...YOU LET GO OF MY HAND?


NO-
ELLE!!
DAD!
MOM!!

NO...
NOT
YET.
DID YOU
FIND
HER?


DON'T
CAUSE
US SUCH
HEART-
ACHE,
NOELLE.
I'M
SORRY...
BUT
I'M GLAD
YOU'RE
SAFE.

OH,
NOELLE...
WE CAN'T
RISK GOING
FARTHER
INTO THE
FOREST.
SHOOT...

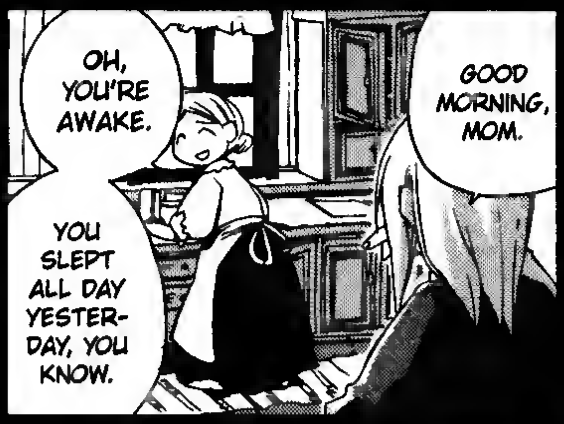

THANK
YOU FOR
SAVING MY
DAUGHTER.
ARE
YOU A
TRAV-
ELER?
I JUST
HAPPENED
TO PASS
BY. THAT'S
ALL.

SFX: HAHAHAHA
la la la
NO
WAY!
DEVIL?
WHAT'S
THAT?
DO YOU
THINK
NOELLE WAS
KILLED BY
THE DEVIL?

don't
agree just
because
you got
too lazy
for expla
nations.
YES.
POOR
THING. FROM
WHAT I SEE,
YOU LOST
A FELLOW
TRAVELER,
TOO.
THANK
YOU.

RUSTLE
THERE'S NO
WAY THERE'S
SOMEONE
DRESSED IN
BLACK CAR-
RYING A
COFFIN.
THAT'S JUST
A FIB WE
TOLD KIDS TO
STOP THEM
FROM GOING
INTO THE
FOREST.

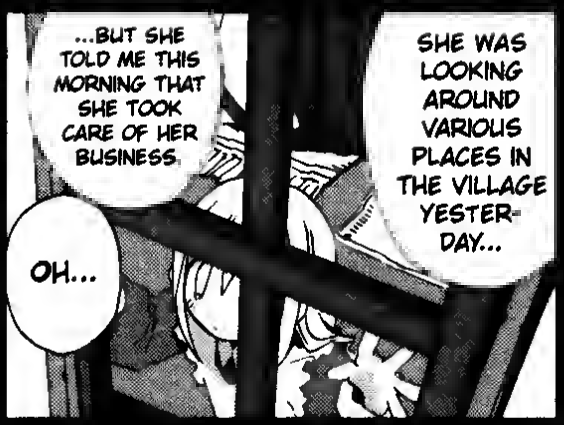
Hey, what's up? You've been looking at your hand since yesterday.
They were a pretty interesting group.
IT'S NOTHING.


OH, YOU'RE AWAKE.
GOOD MORNING, MOM.
YOU SLEPT ALL DAY YESTERDAY, YOU KNOW.

...IS a problem no matter where you go.
But you know, that coffin of yours...
WHY don't you just throw it away?

SHE LEFT ALREADY.
WHERE DID THE TRAVELER GO?
SO SOON!?

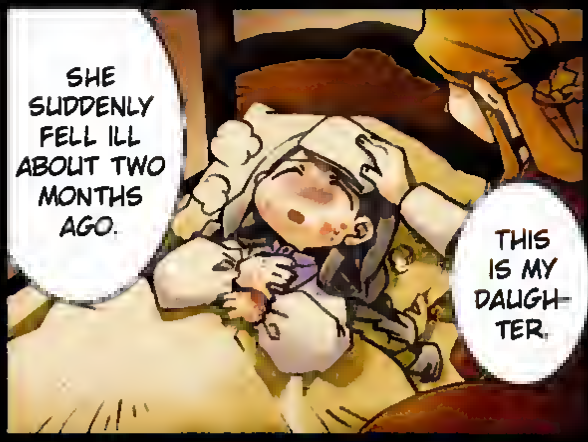
.....
I CAN'T...
...DO THAT.


...BUT SHE TOLD ME THIS MORNING THAT SHE TOOK CARE OF HER BUSINESS.
SHE WAS LOOKING AROUND VARIOUS PLACES IN THE VILLAGE YESTERDAY...
OH...

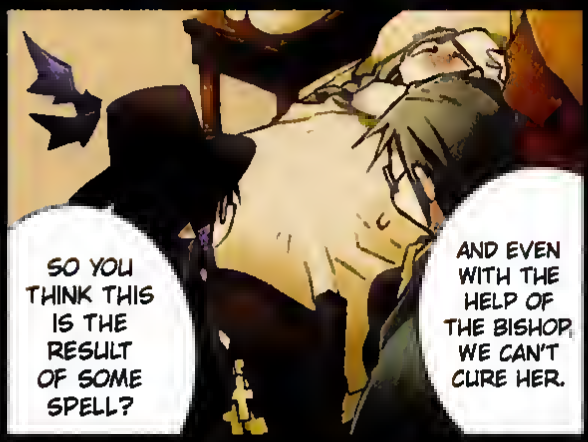
BECAUSE IF I STAY THIS WAY...
...BY THE TIME MY JOURNEY ENDS,
...I'M GOING TO NEED IT.

I DIDN'T GET TO ASK...
...FOR HER NAME...

...ARE ALL PRETTY RELIGIOUS.
AND FOR THAT REASON, THE PEOPLE OF THIS CITY...
I SEE. THAT'S WHY...
WHAT AN AMAZING CATHEDRAL.
BEFORE, THERE WAS NOTHING AROUND HERE.
I wonder if we look that unfortunate.
...ALL THE PASSERSBY ARE GIVING ME BLESSINGS AND AMULETS.
HAVE A SAFE TRIP!
GLITTER
I SEE.
...THANKS TO THE SPREAD OF RELIGION.
BUT IT GREW TO BE A BIG CITY...


SHE SUDDENLY FELL ILL ABOUT TWO MONTHS AGO.
THIS IS MY DAUGHTER.

UM...
EXCUSE ME.


SO YOU THINK THIS IS THE RESULT OF SOME SPELL?
AND EVEN WITH THE HELP OF THE BISHOP, WE CAN'T CURE HER.

HUH?
UM, ACTUALLY...
BY THE WAY, WE HAVE ENOUGH CROSSES. THANK YOU.
YES?

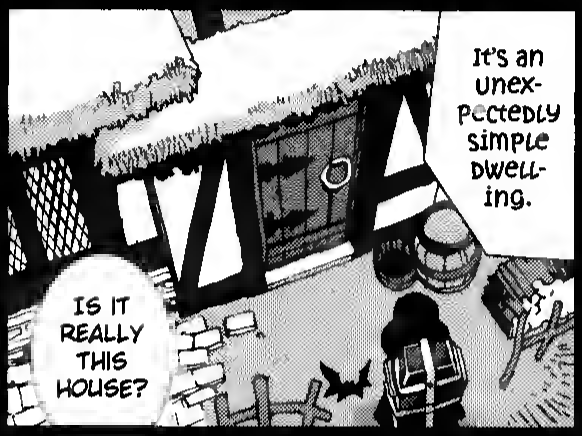
SOMETIMES THIS CITY HAS RESIDENTS WHO CAN'T BE HEALED.
AND WE ALL SAY THAT IT'S THE DOING OF...

...THAT MAYBE YOU'RE FAMILIAR WITH UNORTHODOX MAGIC OR WITCHCRAFT.
...UH, I JUST FELT...

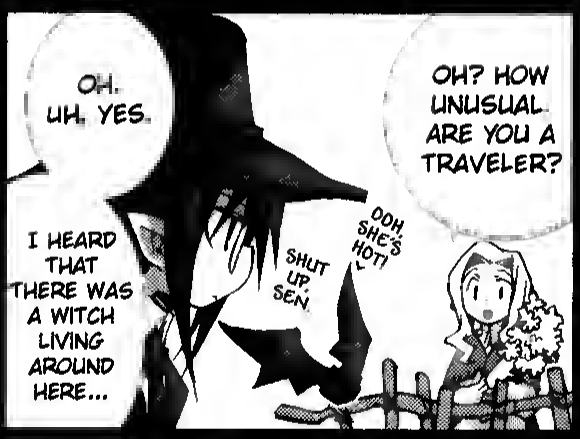
...A WITCH...
...WHO LIVES ON THE HILL AT THE EDGE OF THIS CITY.

SO WOULD YOU PLEASE COME TO MY HOUSE?
I CAN'T REALLY EXPLAIN IT WELL...
WE'VE NEVER HAD SOMEONE BE SO BLUNT ABOUT IT.
SO YOU'RE SAYING WE LOOK SUSPICIOUS.

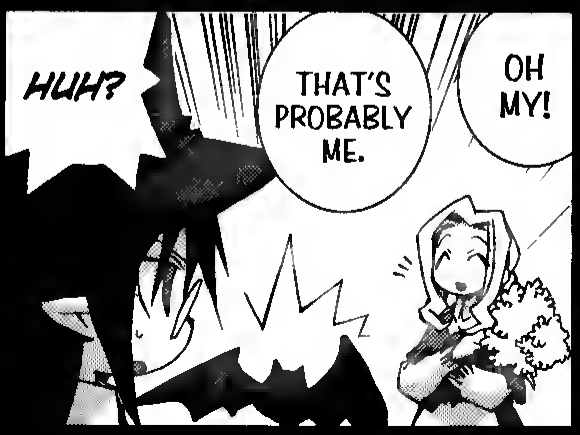
Hey! COULD it be...?
...A WITCH...

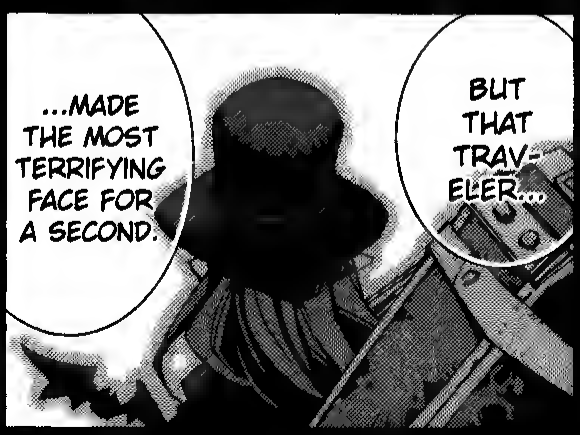

It's an unexpectedly simple dwelling.
IS IT REALLY THIS HOUSE?

HUH?
LET'S GO, SEN.
UM, TRAVELER!?
SHE LIVES on the HILL at the edge of this city, right?


OH. UH. YES.
OH? HOW UNUSUAL. ARE YOU A TRAVELER?
I HEARD THAT THERE WAS A WITCH LIVING AROUND HERE...
SHUT UP, SEN.
OOH, SHE'S HOT!

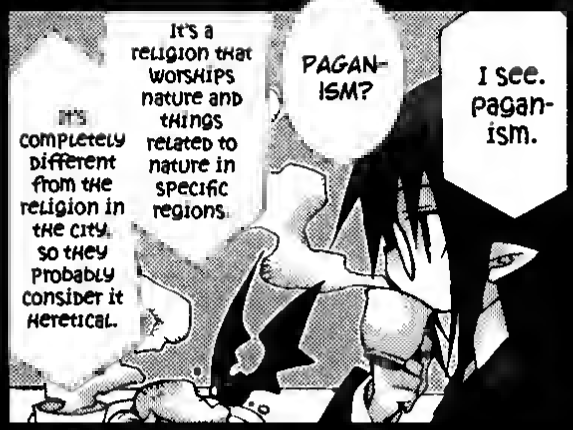
I DON'T KNOW...
IS SHE REALLY GOING TO GO FOR US?
I WONDER WHAT'S GOING ON?
I WONDER IF SHE'S IN THE SAME BUSINESS?

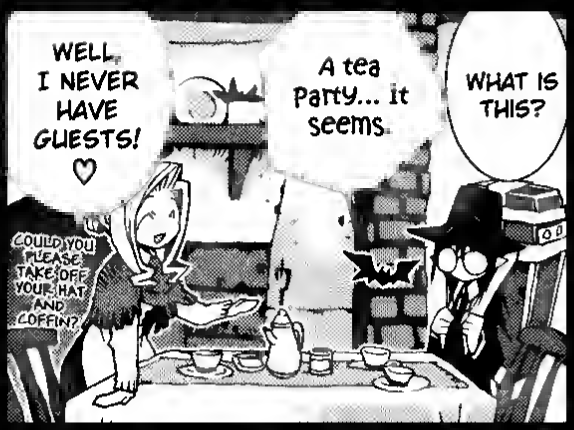

HUH?
THAT'S PROBABLY ME.
OH MY!


...MADE THE MOST TERRIFYING FACE FOR A SECOND.
BUT THAT TRAVELER...

I'M JUST THE DESCENDANT OF A LOCAL FAMILY OF HEALERS.
ALTHOUGH I'M ONLY A WITCH IN NAME. THE PEOPLE FROM THE CITY CALL ME THAT.
PLEASE HAVE A SCONE.

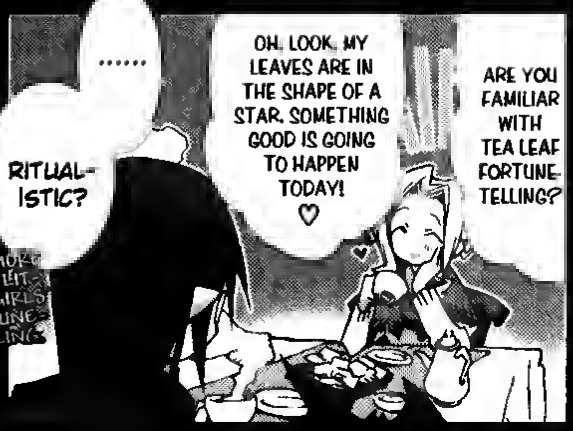
.....
PLEASE! COME IN.


It's completely different from the religion in the city, so they probably consider it heretical.
It's a religion that worships nature and things related to nature in specific regions.
PAGAN-ISM?
I see. Pagan-ism.


WELL, I NEVER HAVE GUESTS! ♡
A tea party... it seems.
WHAT IS THIS?
COULD YOU PLEASE TAKE OFF YOUR HAT AND COFFIN?

It's along those lines.
OH, YEAH.
In our hometown, we had an old lady who knew about old legends and traditional healing, right?
LIKE "OLD LADY WISDOM."
Just think of pagan-ism as a little more ritualistic.

YES.
WHY?
You're... a witch, right?
UM, I'M GOING TO ASK AGAIN.


.....
RITUAL-ISTIC?
OH, LOOK, MY LEAVES ARE IN THE SHAPE OF A STAR. SOMETHING GOOD IS GOING TO HAPPEN TODAY! ♡
ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH TEA LEAF FORTUNE-TELLING?
IT'S MORE LIKE LITTLE GIRLS' FORTUNE-TELLING.

It's even tougher when she apologizes about it...
I'M SORRY, DID I NOT MEET YOUR EXPECTA-TIONS?
OH, REALLY?
I'M JUST SUR-PRISED THAT IT'S YOU...

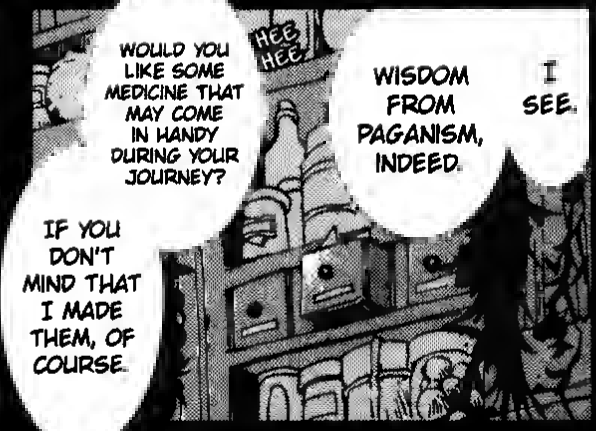
YOU TWO SURE HAVE A MYSTERIOUS AIR ABOUT YOU.
BY THE WAY, BLACK TRAVELER-SAN?

DO TELL ME IF YOU DON'T LIKE THEM.
I ADDED SOME OF THE HERBS THAT GROW IN MY GARDEN.
...HAVE AN INTERESTING TASTE.
AH, THE TEA AND SNACKS...
IT'S GOOD.

I'M ONLY SAYING WHAT I FEEL, SO IT'S ABSTRACT.
WELL, ACTUALLY...
YOU MEAN, WE LOOK FISHY?
OH, SHE'S STILL MAD ABOUT THE EARLIER INCIDENT.

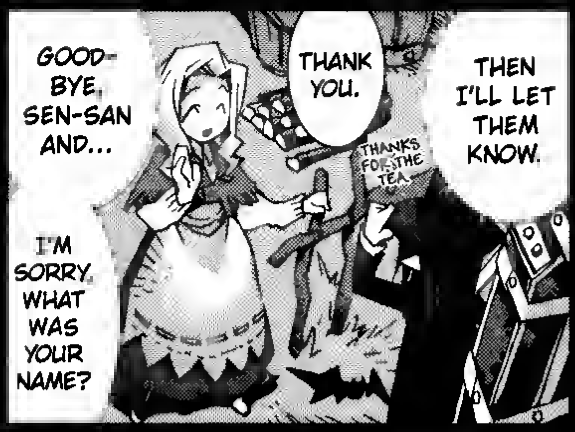
HEALERS ARE FAMILIAR WITH MEDICINES DERIVED FROM NATURE.
YES.
HERBS?

IT'S LIKE SOMEONE ELSE TAINTED YOUR TRUE COLOR WITH ANOTHER SHADE.
YES, THAT'S IT. I FEEL THAT THE BLACK YOU WEAR...
...WAS FORCED ON YOU AND ISN'T YOUR TRUE COLOR.


WOULD YOU LIKE SOME MEDICINE THAT MAY COME IN HANDY DURING YOUR JOURNEY?
IF YOU DON'T MIND THAT I MADE THEM, OF COURSE.
HEE HEE.
WISDOM FROM PAGANISM, INDEED.
I SEE.

WAS I ABLE TO SAY SOMETHING JUST A LITTLE WITCH-LIKE, I WONDER?
HEE-HEE.
You can tell?
.....

THAT MAY BE A LITTLE DIFFICULT.
AND POISON THAT CAN KILL BATS, TOO, PLEASE.
How about an aphrodisiac that'll make a woman fall in love with me instantly?
HMMM...
FLAP
FLAP

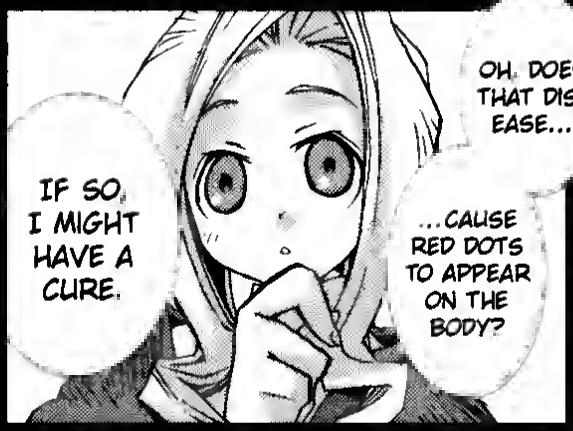

GOOD-BYE, SEN-SAN AND...
I'M SORRY, WHAT WAS YOUR NAME?
THANK YOU.
THANKS FOR THE TEA.
THEN I'LL LET THEM KNOW.

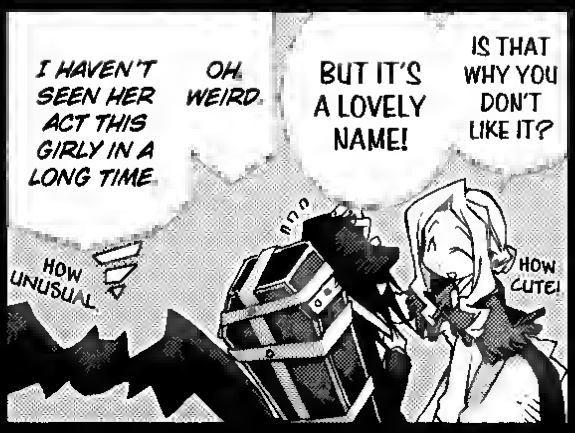
...DIDN'T YOU COME HERE BECAUSE YOU NEEDED SOMETHING?
OH, BUT...
I HAD SO MUCH FUN TODAY!
OH...

I'D LIKE TO KNOW. WON'T YOU PLEASE TELL ME?
OH, I'M SURE THAT'S NOT TRUE.
...COS IT DOESN'T SUIT HER.
SHE HASN'T TOLD ANYONE HER REAL NAME...
UH, MY NA-
.....
SEN!

AND EVERYONE'S SAYING THAT IT WAS CAUSED BY A WITCH'S CURSE.
THERE'S A CHILD IN TOWN WITH AN INCURABLE DISEASE.
YES.
OH, MY.
ME?

.....
OH, MY!


OH, DOES THAT DISEASE...
...CAUSE RED DOTS TO APPEAR ON THE BODY?
IF SO, I MIGHT HAVE A CURE.


I HAVEN'T SEEN HER ACT THIS GIRLY IN A LONG TIME.
OH, WEIRD.
BUT IT'S A LOVELY NAME!
IS THAT WHY YOU DON'T LIKE IT?
HOW UNUSUAL.
HOW CUTE!

I DIDN'T CAST A CURSE.
OH, PLEASE DON'T MISUNDERSTAND.
.....

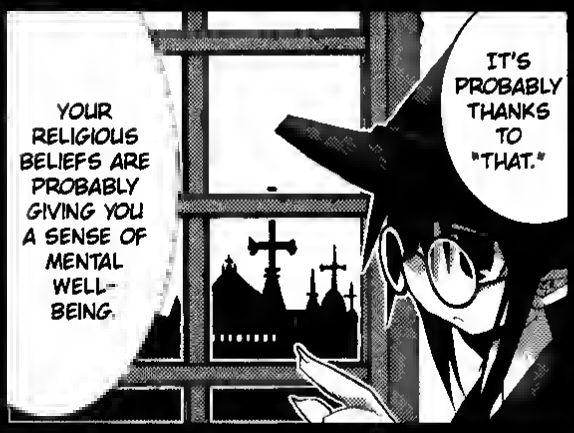
HERE I HAVE A RECIPE FOR A MEDICINE YOU CAN GIVE HER.
THERE'S A FASTER WAY TO CURE HER.

YES.
IF IT'S A CHILD WITH STRONG NERVES, IT'S ALMOST DEFINITELY SO.
HUH!?
A NEUROTIC DISORDER... "SPIRIT FEVER"?

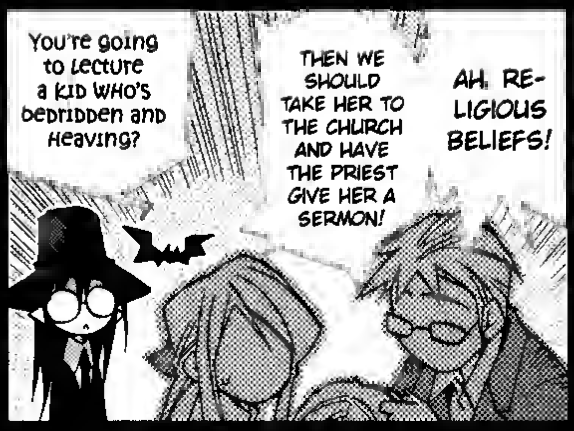
UH... OKAY.
THEN I'M OFF.
I GOT IT FROM A FRIEND. PLEASE TRY IT.

BUT WE'VE NEVER HEARD OF THIS DISEASE UNTIL NOW.
ORIGINALLY, IT WAS A DISEASE RELATED TO THE CLIMATE OF THIS REGION.
THERE WAS A TIME WHEN MANY CAUGHT THIS AFFLICTION AND LOST THEIR LIVES.

!!!
I DON'T KNOW ANY OF THE INGREDIENTS IN THIS RECIPE.
UM... WAIT!
AND THERE'S NO ONE IN TOWN WHO CAN MAKE THIS.


YOUR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS ARE PROBABLY GIVING YOU A SENSE OF MENTAL WELL-BEING.
IT'S PROBABLY THANKS TO "THAT."

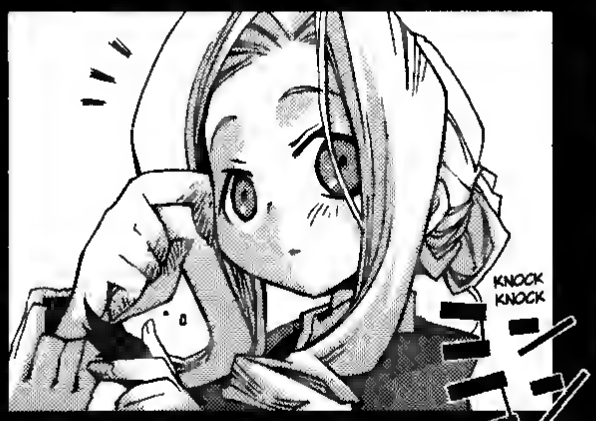
WELL, THEN...
GOOD-BYE.
YES, THERE IS.
THE WITCH LIVING AT THE EDGE OF TOWN.

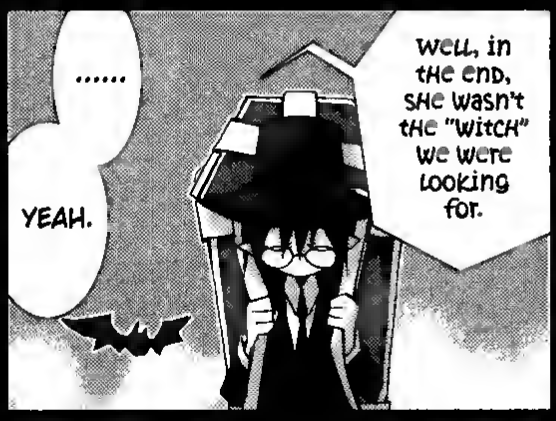

You're going to lecture a kid who's bedridden and heaving?
THEN WE SHOULD TAKE HER TO THE CHURCH AND HAVE THE PRIEST GIVE HER A SERMON!
AH. RELIGIOUS BELIEFS!

D-DO YOU THINK IT'S OKAY? WON'T THE WITCH KILL US?
WE CAN'T TURN BACK NOW. COME ON.

WHO KNOWS?
DO YOU THINK THEY'LL GO TO THE WITCH?
I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH THEY TRUST ME.

SHE WAS JUST LABELED A WITCH 'COS HER BELIEFS DIFFERED FROM THOSE OF THE TOWNSPEOPLE.
YEAH.
BUT I CAN'T BELIEVE THERE ARE GOOD WITCHES LIKE HER.


KNOCK KNOCK


.....
YEAH.
WELL, IN THE END, SHE WASN'T THE "WITCH" WE WERE LOOKING FOR.

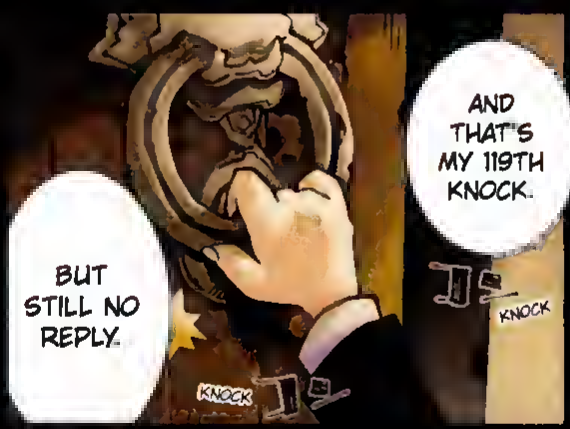
YES?
PAT
WHO IS IT?
OH MY
I HAVE A LOT OF GUESTS TODAY.
PAT

IT SEEMS...
...THAT WE'VE GOT A LONG WAY YET TO TRAVEL.

Shoulder-a-Coffin Kuro by Satoko Kiyuduki

I WONDER WHAT'S WRONG?
DO YOU THINK THEY CAN'T LEAVE THIS PLACE?
THEY WON'T TURN INTO ASH IF THEY GO INTO THE SUN, RIGHT?
I GUESS THEY'VE NEVER REALLY STEPPED OUTSIDE.
THEY'RE HESITATING.
OR ARE THEY SCARED STIFF?
IT'S OKAY.
COME ON.
LET'S GO.
ONE HAND ISN'T ENOUGH, "KURO..."
...SINCE THERE ARE TWO OF THEM.

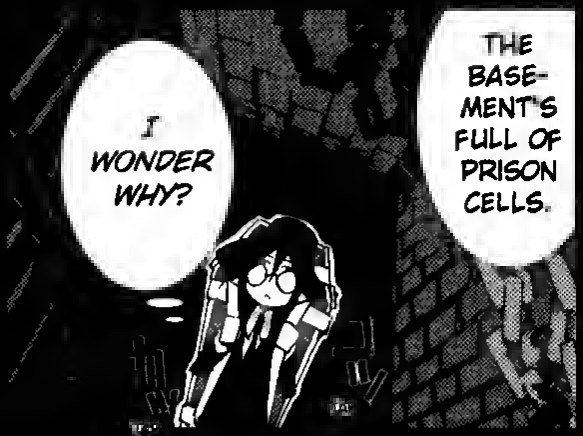
LIFT
I SEE.
THIRTY-EIGHT TIMES ON THE HOURGLASS AND THE SUN SET 53 DEGREES.
THEN I SHOULD DO THIS BEFORE IT GETS DARK.


BUT STILL NO REPLY.
KNOCK
AND THAT'S MY 119TH KNOCK.
KNOCK

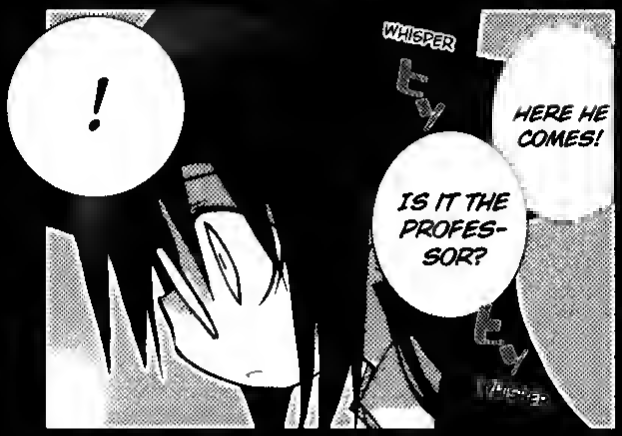
HUH!?
Wai—
Hey!!
CRASH

HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN SINCE MY FIRST KNOCK?
THERE'S A PILE OF MAIL AND NOTES ON THE STOOP.

...?
TWITCH
...JUST 'COS YOU'RE INTERESTED IN HIS RESEARCH.
YEAH, WELL...
OH, NO. YOU'RE UNUSUALLY AGGRESSIVE...
HEY, HEY, WAKE UP.
HMM?
...I MIGHT FIND A CLUE TO UNDO THIS.
THERE AREN'T THAT MANY SCIENTISTS WHO STUDY THE OCCULT.
WELL, TRUE, BUT...
EVEN IF HE'S NOT HERE...
I HEARD A SOUND JUST NOW.
WHAT KIND OF SOUND?
THE SOUND OF SOMETHING.
WHAT'RE YOU GONNA DO IF THERE'S SOMEONE INSIDE...
...OR IF HE COMES HOME?
LET'S SEE...
SUSPICIOUS TRAVELER INSIDE HIS HOME
NO, WELL...
I GUESS I GET IT, BUT ISN'T THIS ILLEGAL?
BUT IT'S...
...PROBABLY PROFESSOR'S SOUND.
YOU'RE THAT WILLING TO SELL ME OUT, EH?
IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE.
NO WAY!
OR MAYBE TO BE USED FOR FOOD.
...I'LL BE A SALESPERSON OF BAT SPECIMENS... FOR EXPERIMENTS.
WELL, IF I CAN'T SAY I'M A TRAVELER...


I WONDER WHY?
THE BASEMENT'S FULL OF PRISON CELLS.

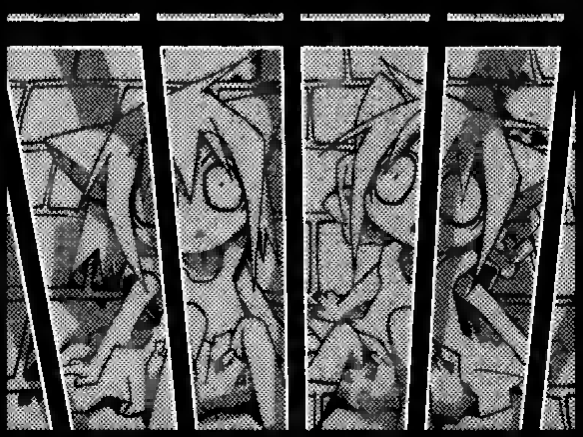
WE'LL BE EFFICIENT...
LET'S SEARCH THE MANSION.

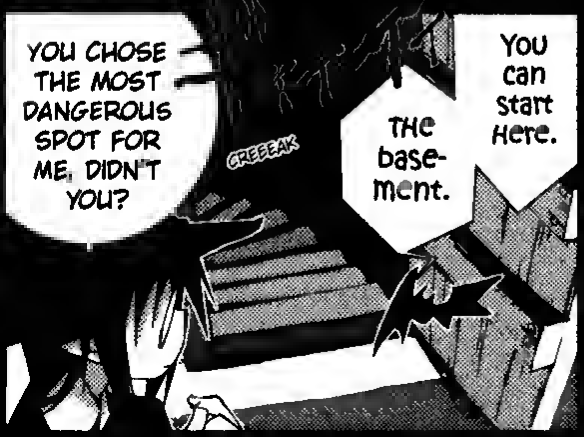

!
WHISPER
HERE HE COMES!
IS IT THE PROFESSOR?

FLAP
CAN YOU GUYS SPLIT UP AND CHECK EACH ROOM?
GIVE ME ANY INFORMATION THAT MIGHT LEAD US TO SOMETHING.
FLAP

WA-WAH!
IS SOMEONE THERE?

OOPS, YOU CAUGHT ME.
SORRY. THEN WHERE SHOULD I LOOK?
YEAH, YEAH.
You always try to make me do all the work.
You should stop being lazy and search, too!
AND YOU TREAT ME HORRIBLY TO BOOT.
SFX: RUMBLE RUMBLE




YOU CHOSE THE MOST DANGEROUS SPOT FOR ME, DIDN'T YOU?
CREEEAK
THE basement.
You can start here.

WHO ARE YOU KIDS?
YOUR NAMES?
WHAT WEIRD PRONUNCIATION.
NIJUKU.
SANJU.

.....

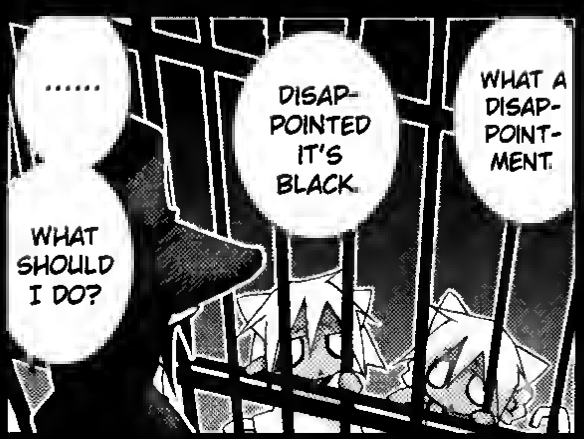
THEY'RE NOT WEIRD.
THE PROFESSOR GAVE THEM TO US.
.....?
POUT

KIDS?

WE'RE THE PROFESSOR'S EXPERIMENTS.
!
SO HE GAVE US SPECIAL NAMES.

IT'S NOT THE PROFESSOR.
IT'S NOT HIM.
IT'S A PERSON IN PITCH BLACK.
.....

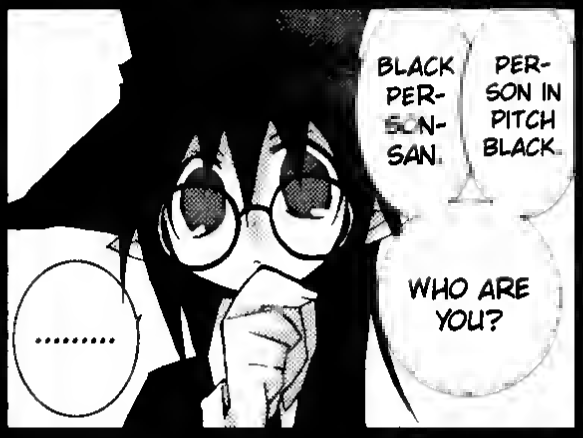
I SEE.
NIJUKU AND SANJU...
...EH?


WHAT A DISAPPOINTMENT.
DISAPPOINTED IT'S BLACK.
.....
WHAT SHOULD I DO?

ANYWAY, I SHOULD LET YOU KIDS OUT.
OUT?
CAN WE REALLY GO OUT?

WE SAID OUR NAMES!
YOUR TURN NOW!

THEN WE'RE GOING OUT.
DAAASH!
!?


BLACK PER-SON-SAN.
PER-SON IN PITCH BLACK.
WHO ARE YOU?
.....

THEY VAN-ISHED?
NIJUKU? SANJU?
OVER HERE.
WE'RE HERE.

SINCE...
...I'M IN ALL BLACK...
MY NAME'S KURO...!
...I GUESS?

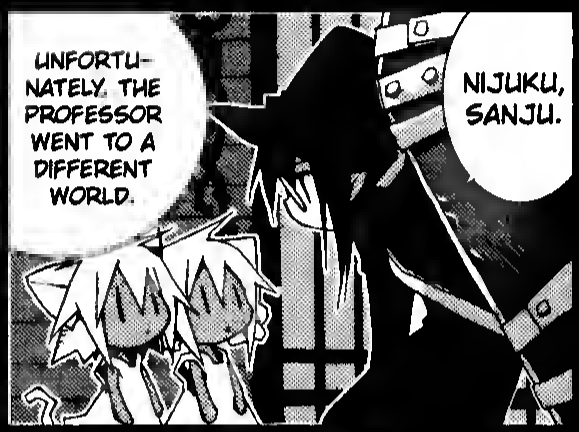
KURO-CHA.
OVER HERE.
TINY
WHOA!?

WHAT A WEIRD NAME.
BUT IT'S PERFECT.
YEAH.
I THINK SO, TOO.
KURO-CHAN?
KURO-CHAN?

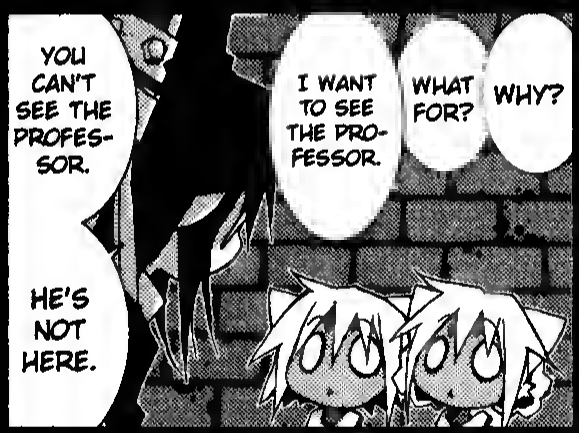
SOMETHING CAME
WHAT'S UP?
OH, SEN.
What are you doing here?
KURO-CHAN, CLAP!
BACK TO NOR-MAL.
.....
SFX FLAP
SCREE
OH YEAH
!?
I came to check up on you cos you were taking so long.
I'LL THINK ABOUT HOW YOU DID THAT LATER.
PROFESSOR USED TO CLAP WHEN WE DID THIS.
HEY, HEY, WHERE'S OUR AP-PLAUSE?
IF YOU COULD GET OUT, HOW COME YOU DIDN'T BEFORE?
HUH?
IT'S THE DANGEROUS THING!!
...AND TO WAIT HERE WHERE IT'S SAFE.
...THAT IT WILL BE DANGEROUS FOR A WHILE...
BECAUSE THE PRO-FESSOR SAID...
FLAP
FLAP
WH-What's going on!?
WHoa!!?
PROFES-SOR, COME BACK!
WAAAAH! DANGER-OUS THING, GO AWAY!
Hey, can you at least try to help me here!?
GOOD WORK
?
?
IS HE STILL IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS DANGEROUS THING?
BUT HE HASN'T COME BACK YET.

.....
...and were probably waiting for their master to come back for a long time.
But these kids didn't know anything...

There're so many things I wanna say, but I don't know where to start.
THE SITUATION'S THE INSULTS.
THAT'S THE MOST OBNOXIOUS ONE. BUT IT'S REALLY WEAK.
BUT THERE'S ONE LEFT.
REALLY, KURO-CHAN?
DON'T WORRY. THEY'RE GONE NOW.

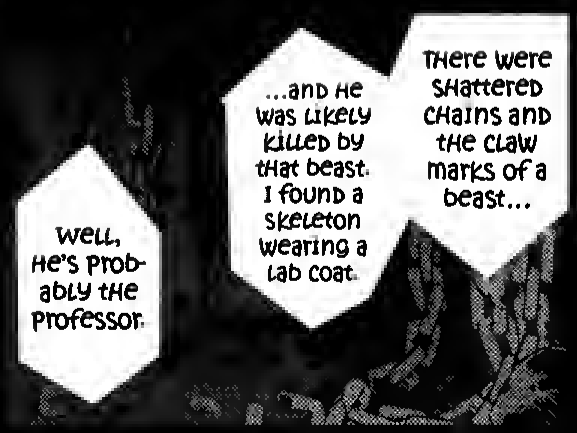

UNFORTUNATELY, THE PROFESSOR WENT TO A DIFFERENT WORLD.
NIJUKU, SANJU.

TO THESE KIDS, I'M "KURO."
...??
HUH?
IT'S MY NAME.
What's this "Kuro-chan" thing?

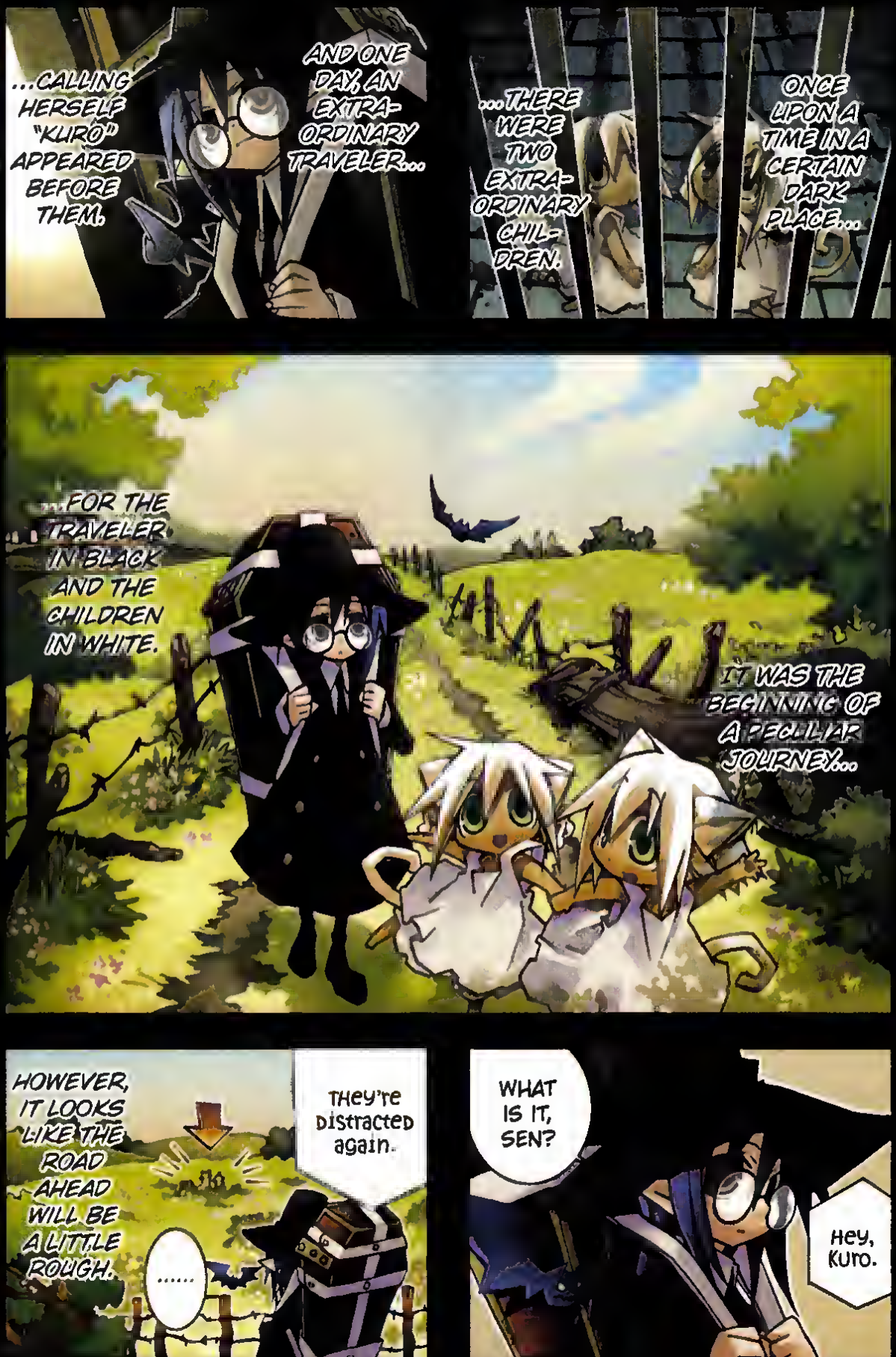

YOU CAN'T SEE THE PROFESSOR.
HE'S NOT HERE.
I WANT TO SEE THE PROFESSOR.
WHAT FOR?
WHY?

...OR SHOULD I SAY THE MAN WHO USED TO BE THE OWNER...
There was a weird room, see?
!
Well, "Kuro," I found the owner of this mansion...
Uh...
Okay, fine.

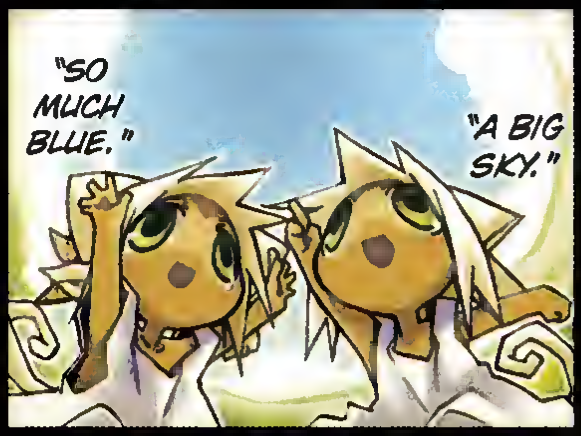
SO...
THEN...
...WHERE DO WE GO TO SEE HIM?


Well, he's probably the professor.
...and he was likely killed by that beast. I found a skeleton wearing a lab coat.
There were shattered chains and the claw marks of a beast...

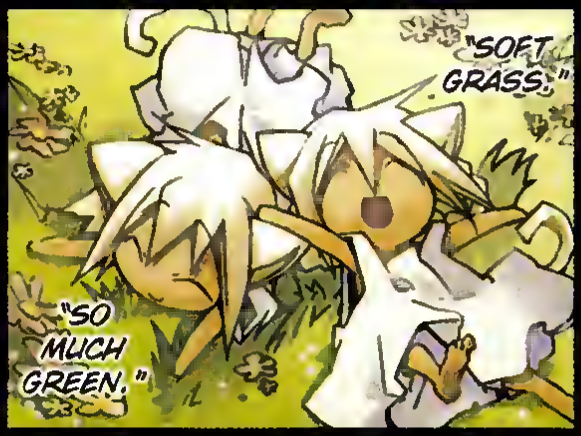
...LIKE US.
SO I'M SURE THEIR LIVES HAVE A PURPOSE.
JUST...
CREEEAL
"KUTO" !?
What are you going to do with these two?
OKAY.
FOLLOW ME.
THAT'S WHY...
I DON'T KNOW WHY THESE KIDS WERE MADE...
...BUT THEY WERE BORN INTO THIS WORLD.
...TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD...
...TO FIND THAT PURPOSE?
DO YOU WANT TO COME WITH US...


ONCE UPON A TIME IN A CERTAIN DARK PLACE...
...THERE WERE TWO EXTRA-ORDINARY CHIL-DREN.
AND ONE DAY, AN EXTRA-ORDINARY TRAVELER...
...CALLING HERSELF "KURO" APPEARED BEFORE THEM.
IT WAS THE BEGINNING OF A PECULIAR JOURNEY...
...FOR THE TRAVELER IN BLACK AND THE CHILDREN IN WHITE.
WHAT IS IT, SEN?
HEY, KURO.
THEY'RE DISTRACTED AGAIN.
HOWEVER, IT LOOKS LIKE THE ROAD AHEAD WILL BE A LITTLE ROUGH.
.....

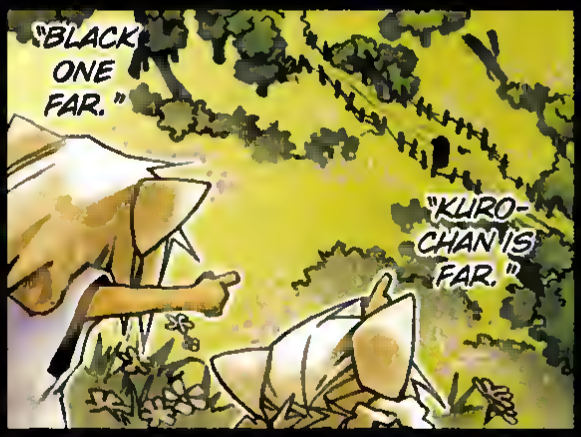
"YOU BETTER LOOK OUT FOR THEM. YOU'RE THE ONE WHO BROUGHT THEM ALONG."
"OKAY, OKAY."
"HONESTLY, I DON'T LIKE THOSE TWO. THEY RUN AROUND TOO MUCH. IT'S IRRITATING."


"SO MUCH BLUE."
"A BIG SKY."

"AH."


"SOFT GRASS."
"SO MUCH GREEN."

"NOW, WHICH ONE ARE YOU? NIJUKU? OR SANJU?"
"FOUND YOU!"
"WHOA!?"
FLAIL
FLAP


"BLACK ONE FAR."
"KURO-CHAN IS FAR."

Actually, who is this?

"DON'T KNOW. WHY DON'T YOU RAISE A 'WHITE' FLAG?"
"...OKAY, SEN. WHERE ARE THE TWO 'WHITE' KIDS?"

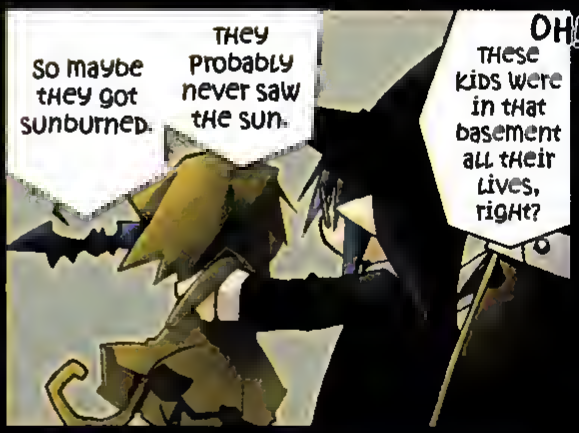
I GOT THE COLOR FROM THIS TREE.
"GOT THE COLOR"?

HEEHEE, YOU'RE RIGHT.
UMM... NI-JUKU?

I STILL CAN'T FIGURE OUT THEIR PHYSICAL MAKEUP.
? AS in camou-flage?
I'LL GIVE IT BACK.

SHE'S not DIRTY exact-LY... It's more LIKE SHE was DYED brown.
IT'S NOT MUD.
WHAT HAP-PENED?
YOU'RE COVERED IN MUD.

.....
...the green thing over there is...
So that means...


So maybe they got sunburned.
They probably never saw the sun.
OH! These kids were in that basement all their lives, right?

RUSTLE
EEK!

I was kidding.
PLOP
?

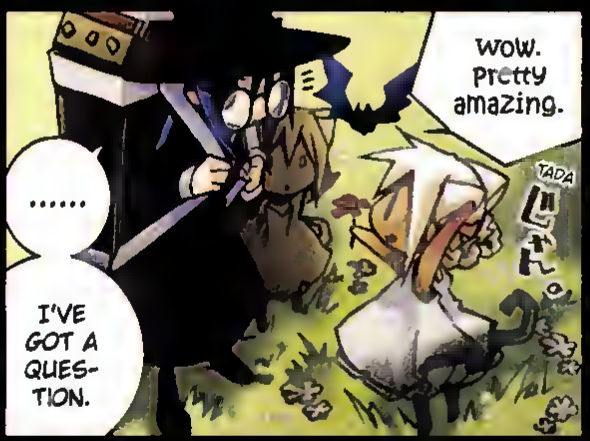
PLOP
LIKE THIS.
YEAH.
!?

YEAH.
PLUCK
DID YOU GET THE COLOR FROM SOMEWHERE TOO?

HUH?
WHAT IS THIS!?
GEH!!

LIKE THIS.
WHOOSH
SEE?

KIDS ARE SO HONEST AND CRUEL.
DAMN.
THE ORIGINAL COLOR WAS TOO STRONG, SO IT MIXED.
SO SEN'S A WEIRD COLOR.
HEEHEE, SEN IS A WEIRD COLOR.
PLUS, THEY'RE ADDRESSING ME SO FAMILIARLY.


WOW. PRETTY AMAZING.
TADA
.....
I'VE GOT A QUESTION.

GO AHEAD AND LAUGH IN MY FACE.
IT'S OKAY, KURO.
HOLDING IT IN IS BAD FOR YOU.

...DO THE OPPOSITE OF THAT AS WELL?
WOULD YOU

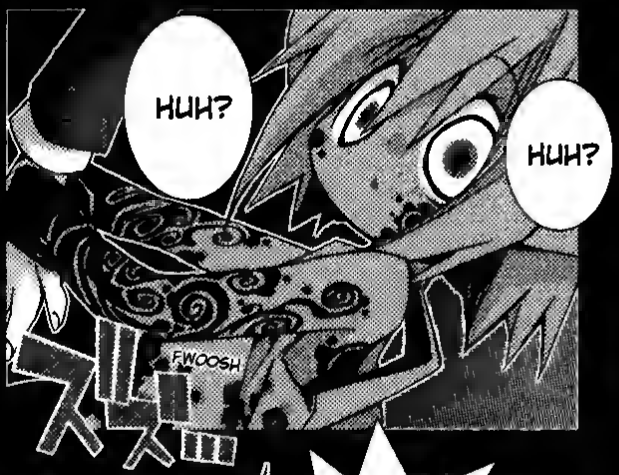
ARE YOU OKAY?
CLOSE YOUR EYES
YEAH. BUT WHY?
I WANTED TO MAKE KURO-CHA GREEN.
BUT I TURNED BLACK.
HMM...

OKAY, I'LL GIVE MY COLOR TO KURO-CHA, TOO.
WAIT, DON'T...
GOOD DO IT!

THAT'S BECAUSE I'M BLACK.
NO MATTER WHAT COLOR YOU MIX WITH BLACK PAINT, IT TURNS BLACK.
IT'S A COLOR THAT CAN'T BE BRIGHT LIKE YOU TWO.

OH?
SEEP
Ehh...

THAT'S WHY YOU MUSTN'T DO THIS TO ME OR SEN AGAIN.
NOW GO WASH OFF AT THAT WELL.


HUH?
HUH?
FWOOSH

NO. SHE'S actually pretty depressed.
WAS SHE HAPPY?
KURO-CHAN WAS SORT OF SMILING.
.....

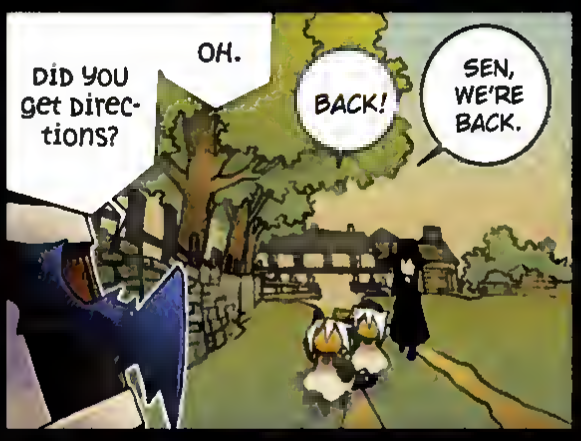
NIJU-KU!?
POOF
WHOa. SHE'S Pitch black!!

HEY, SANJU.
WHY WOULD KURO-CHA BE DEPRESSED?
UM... HMMM...
BECAUSE SHE'S BLACK?
SPLISH
YES, THAT'S IT. I FEEL THAT THE BLACK YOU WEAR...
...WAS FORCED ON YOU AND ISN'T YOUR TRUE COLOR. IT'S LIKE SOMEONE ELSE TAINTED YOUR TRUE COLOR WITH ANOTHER SHADE.
...
IF SHE'S BLACK, SHE STAYS BLACK.
DO YOU NEED MORE WATER?
NO THANKS.
I BET...
...KURO-CHAN DOESN'T WANT TO BE BLACK.
You're remembering the witch we met before, HUH?
She was Hot.
YEAH.
BUT NOT FOR THAT REASON.
SANJU IS WHITE.
NIJUKU IS WHITE, TOO.
ALTHOUGH YOU TURNED A BIT BLACK
MY HANDS TURNED NIJUKU PITCH BLACK SO QUICKLY.
I FEEL DISGUSTED.
.....
IF I STAY WITH THEM...
...I MIGHT TURN THEM BLACK AGAIN.
Yeah... well, they did turn me into a marble color, too.

KURO-CHAN WON'T CHANGE.
BUT YOU WON'T CHANGE.
.....
NIJUKU, SANJU.
THERE YOU ARE.
KURO-CHA.
SFX. PATTER PATTER PATTER
YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO SEN AND ME!!
I JUST TOLD YOU!!
FLINCH
?
HYAH!
HYAH!
PUSH
PUSH
IF YOU DO IT AGAIN, I'M GOING TO LEAVE YOU TWO.
IF YOU'RE NOT CARE-FUL, YOU MIGHT TURN BLACK AGAIN.
HM!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
HNN!
.....
KURO-CHAN WAS REALLY UPSET.
YEAH, SHE WAS.
Actu-ally...
...she was really happy.
SHE'S JUST HARD TO READ
WE'RE GIVING
WE'RE GIVING OUR WHITE...
...TO KURO-CHAN.

SPARKLY, SHINY DOTS!
REALLY BLACK SKY!
Sigh.
They caused us lots of grief today.
YE-AH. ALTHOUGH IT'S BEEN LIKE THAT EVER SINCE WE PICKED THEM UP
KURO-CHAN COULDN'T TAKE OFF HER BLACKNESS TODAY.
NOPE.
SHE PROBABLY NEEDS A LOT MORE.
HMM.
I'M NOT REALLY SURE MYSELF.
KUTO ...
...Are you going to keep them around forever?
MORE?
YEAH, MORE WHITE.
LIKE THE SHINY DOTS UP THERE.
Of course, I'm not happy about it.
YOU'RE PROBABLY GOING TO HAVE TO DEAL WITH THEM FOR A LONG TIME.
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
SFX. BLUNTLY
OKAY.
THEN WE SHOULD KEEP TRYING...
...TO MAKE KURO-CHAN WHITE.
Thanks to them...
...I've seen you make faces that I haven't seen in a while.
...I can put up with them for a while.
BUT...

They gave us this many?
Pumper-nickel sand-wiches?
YEAH.


OH.
Did you get direc-tions?
BACK!
SEN, WE'RE BACK.

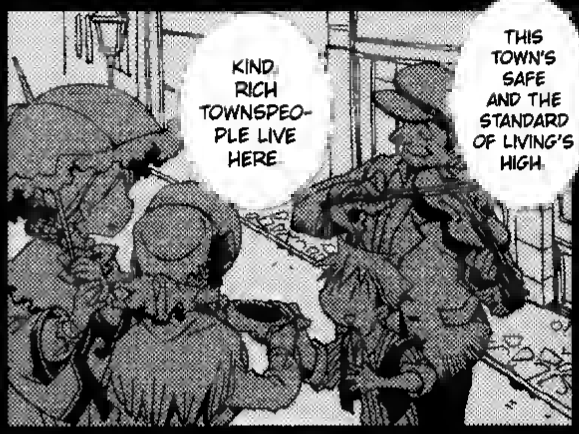
YEAH.
?
.....
It's because of the kids, isn't it?

SOME!
GOT SOME!
YEAH.
AND WE GOT SOU-VENIRS TOO.

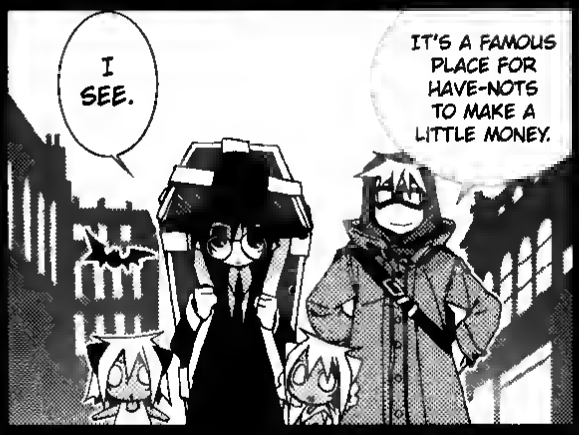
For example, "200 villagers started a riot to protest settlement."
...knowing what's going on in the world will come in handy during our journey.
But still...
IT'S GOOD
IT'S THICK
Oh, give me that paper.
THAT'S BAD NEWS TO BE EDUCATING THEM WITH.
WOW.
"Unidentified corpse found in canal. Weapon of choice was an axe."
HEY.
Well, I'm sure you kids can't understand.
I'm eating information.
THE SANDWICHES TASTE BETTER.
SEN, YOU'RE EATING THAT?
WHAT'S THIS?
SO, IT KNOWS WHERE THE PROFESSOR IS, TOO?
It knows things you guys don't know.
There's a lot of information about the world in newspapers.
SORRY, BUT I'M STILL ALIVE.
NO, but maybe in a few days.
IS THAT WRITTEN IN THE "NEWSPAPER" TOO?
IT'S SWEET.
...Can I have that cream sandwich too?

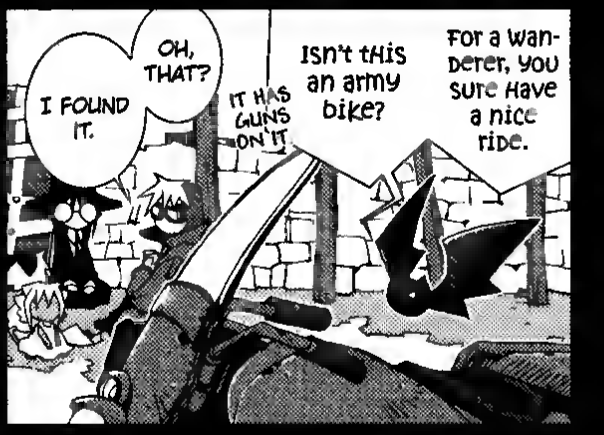
WELL, I SHOULD GET TO WORK.
YOU GUYS CAME HERE FOR THE SAME REASON, RIGHT?
?

ARE YOU ALSO A TRAVELER?
NO
I'M MORE LIKE A WANDERER.
I GO WHEREVER I PLEASE.
GOBBLE
GOBBLE


THIS TOWN'S SAFE AND THE STANDARD OF LIVING'S HIGH.
KIND. RICH TOWNSPEOPLE LIVE HERE.

SORRY I ATE ALL YOUR FOOD.
IT'S EMPTY.
IT'S FINE.
I'M SURE THE WIVES AT THE FARM KNEW WE'D BUMP INTO YOU.

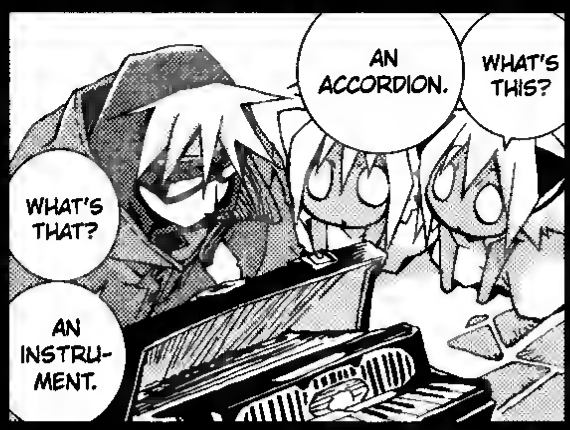

IT'S A FAMOUS PLACE FOR HAVE-NOTS TO MAKE A LITTLE MONEY.
I SEE.


For a wanderer, you sure have a nice ride.
Isn't this an army bike?
IT HAS GUNS ON IT.
OH, THAT?
I FOUND IT.

AND THEY'D BE MORE GENEROUS IF WE HAD KIDS AROUND.
SO LET'S GO.
LET'S GO?
GO?
WHAT?

HOW ABOUT YOU GUYS?
IT'S ODD FOR KIDS TO BE TRAVELING.
.....
I FOUND THEM.

WHAT'S DANCE?
DANCE?
I'LL PLAY THE INSTRU-MENT.
YOU GUYS DANCE.


AN ACCORDION.
WHAT'S THIS?
WHAT'S THAT?
AN INSTRU-MENT.

MOVE?
TRY TO MOVE YOUR BODY TO THE MUSIC.
TRY TO MOVE?

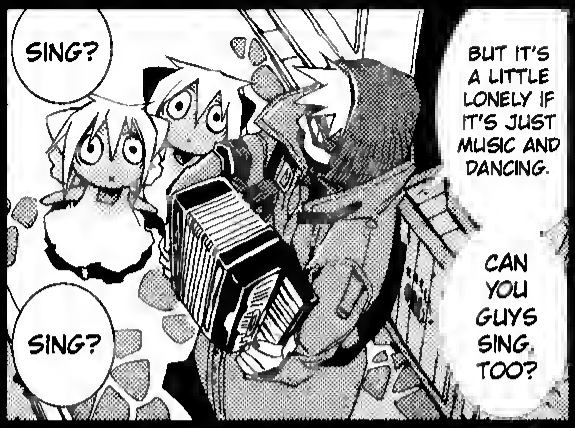
OOH!?
SEE...
...YOU DO THIS, AND...

YAH.
YAH.
JUMP

HOW'D YOU DO IT!? HOW!?
WOW! WOW!

WE'LL BE REST-ING OVER THERE.
YEAH, JUST LIKE THAT.
YAH.
YAH.
JUMP
JUMP
Yeah. Let's pretend we're strangers.

SFX: ROWDY ROWDY
I WONDER WHAT THAT RACKET'S ABOUT?
ME TOO! ME TOO!
LET ME DO IT! LET ME!


SING?
BUT IT'S A LITTLE LONELY IF IT'S JUST MUSIC AND DANCING.
SING?
CAN YOU GUYS SING, TOO?

YOU'RE RIGHT.
OH, but LOOK.
THOSE TWO JUST GOT SOMETHING.

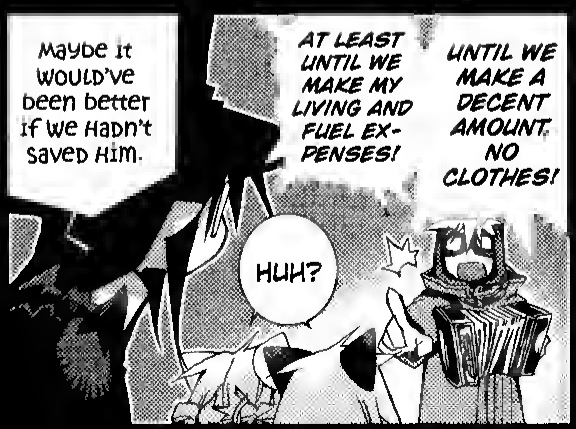
PLEASE DON'T ASK THE KIDS TO DO DIFFICULT THINGS.
IF YOU COULD SING A SAD LOVE SONG ABOUT ARISTOCRATS OR A SONG ABOUT SOLDIERS AND THE KING'S HEAD GETTING CHOPPED OFF, THAT WOULD BE IDEAL.
IF YOU SING, IT ATTRACTS MORE PEOPLE. THEY LIKE IT.

KIDS' CLOTHES, EH?
THEY SAID IT'S "HAND-ME-DOWNS."
WHAT'S THIS?
TO BE EXPECTED CONSIDERING WHAT THEY'RE WEARING...

WE DON'T KNOW "SONG."
WHAT'S A SONG?
YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT A SONG IS?
WHAT!?

IF THEY PUT THOSE ON, THEY WON'T LOOK AS PATHETIC!
HEY, DON'T!
AREN'T YOU GLAD?
DO YOU WANT TO WEAR THEM?
WE WEAR THEM?
WEAR?

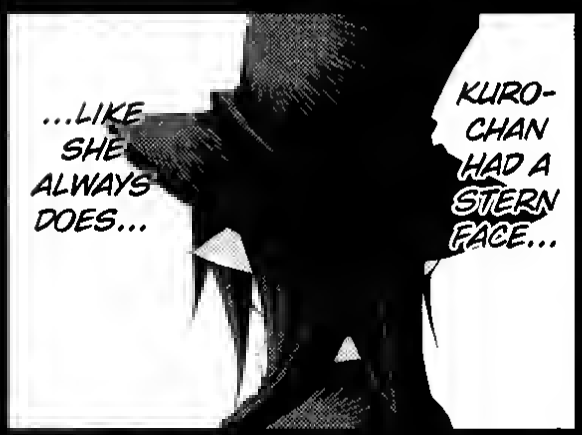
WHAT IS IT?
WHAT IS A SONG?
IF YOU'RE A TRAVELER YOU SHOULD KNOW AT LEAST ONE SONG.
SHEESH, HOW USELESS.


Maybe it would've been better if we hadn't saved him.
AT LEAST UNTIL WE MAKE MY LIVING AND FUEL EXPENSES!
UNTIL WE MAKE A DECENT AMOUNT. NO CLOTHES!
HUH?

"I'M NOT TAKING RESPONSIBILITY, WHATEVER HAPPENS"
THAT'S WHAT KURO-CHAN SAID BEFORE SHE STARTED SINGING.

OH!
ARE THERE "SONGS" IN THE NEWSPAPER?
EH!?
DOES SEN KNOW A "SONG"?
Well I do know some songs, but...
DON'T SING.

SFX: SPURT
!!
Kuro can sing!!
OH, I know.
REALLY?


KURO-CHAN HAD A STERN FACE...
...LIKE SHE ALWAYS DOES...

!?
IT'S A COFFIN-CARRYING FOREIGN SONG REVUE!
OKAY, GATHER AROUND, GATHER AROUND.

...BUT DURING THE SONG...
...IT SEEMED LIKE A WEIRD WIND...
...WAS BLOWING AROUND KURO-CHAN.

SO GOOD LUCK, KUTO.
.....
YOU GUYS OWE ME BIG.
DON'T WORRY. EVEN IF YOU'RE OFF-KEY, I'LL COVER IT WITH THE ACCORDION.

I FEEL SOMETHING GOING THROUGH MY BODY.
YEAH, I WONDER.
I WONDER WHAT THIS IS.
A REALLY WEIRD FEELING.

CHEER

...THAT THE SONG WAS FROM KURO-CHAN'S HOME-TOWN.
I GUESS THAT'S WHAT "SONG" IS.
LATER, SEN TOLD US SECRETLY...

THAT WAS GREAT.
WHERE IS THAT SONG FROM?
WHAT AN INTER-ESTING MELODY.
USE YOUR HAT.

...EVERY-TIME SHE GOT SAD OR THINGS GOT DIFFICULT...
A LONG TIME AGO, WHEN SHE'D JUST STARTED HER JOUR-NEY...

I DIDN'T THINK IT WOULD TURN OUT THIS WELL.
YOU'RE AWE-SOME!
IT WAS A GOOD SONG.

...IN THIS SONG AND SING IT.
...SHE WOULD DESCRIBE THE IN-CIDENTS FROM HER TRAVELS.

.....
PROBABLY.
I THINK YOUR FEMININE VOICE WAS THE REAL DRAW.

I DON'T WANT THEM TO LEARN ANY MORE TRICKS.
NO.
If we used the kids, we probably could've gotten a place for the night.
We're camping again tonight?

I CAN GET BACK TO WANDERING.
THANKS TO YOU, I GOT CASH AND FUEL.

MY FRIENDS USED TO CALL ME "KEI."
NAME?
We didn't catch your name.

I guess they learned it...
...just by hearing you once.
IS THIS...

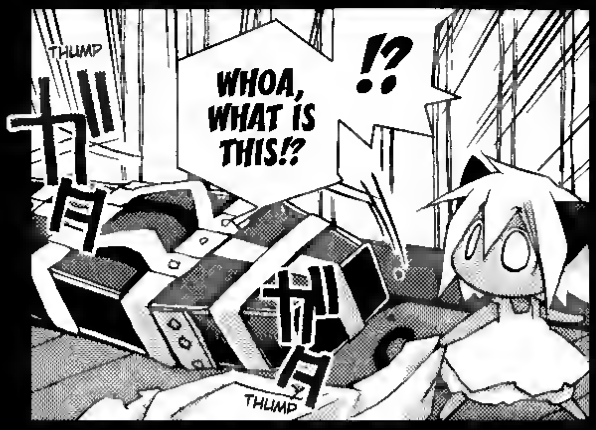
WHEN I POINTED TO SOME RANDOM LETTERS, PEOPLE JUST USED THAT AS MY NAME.
YEAH, I DIDN'T HAVE A NAME BEFORE.
KEI?

Well, I guess they can learn them as we go.
...the lyrics are all made up.
But...

WHOA. HEY, GET OFF...
...Let's be sure to make a run for it.
So the next time we hear something about a guy named "Kei..."
SFX: WHISPER

The traveler laaked an them fram afar and said this:

"But I prabably can't da mare far them than the Professor can da naw."


THUMP
WHOA, WHAT IS THIS!?
!?
THUMP

IT'S NOT HERE EITHER.
I CAN'T FIND IT.

WHAT IS IT?
AH! FOUND IT!
MY SHADOW!
SFX: FLAP FLAP

WHERE DID I PUT IT?
EH? HUH? HOW WEIRD.
THUMP
THUMP

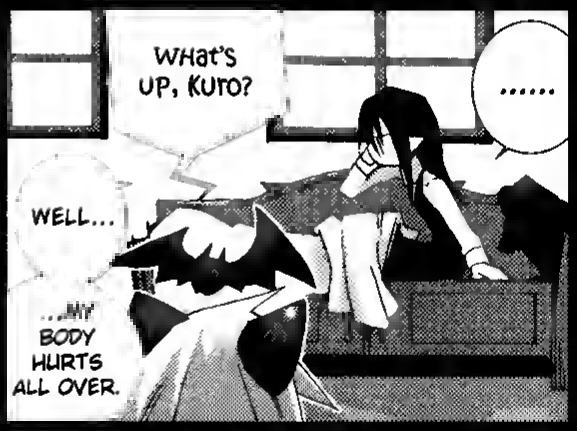
THEY WERE COMING UNDONE, SO I WAS TRYING TO FIX THEM.
AND SHE HATED THAT, I SEE.
SANJU'S BRAIDS?

SHADOWS ARE LESS PATIENT THAN WE ARE.
YOU CAN TAKE OFF YOUR SHADOW?
OOH, IT'S STRUGGLING.
SOMETIMES THEY GO OFF ON THEIR OWN.

...IS DEVELOPING AS THEY TRAVEL WITH US, EH?
HER SENSE OF SELF...
BUT WE CAN'T LEAVE IT MESSY LIKE THAT.

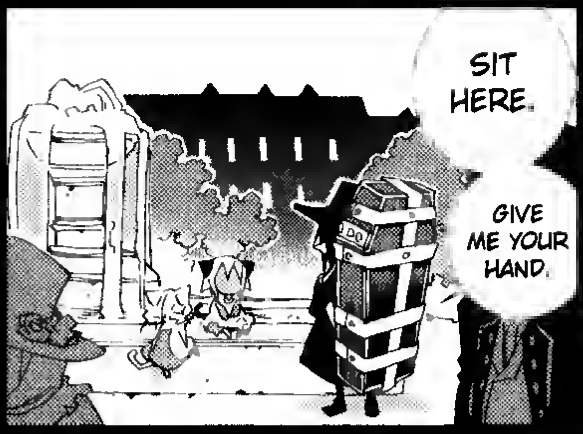
BY THE WAY, YOU SHOULD TELL US THESE THINGS AHEAD OF TIME.
SO THEY REALLY SHADOW YOUR PERSONALITIES.
THAT'S WHEN THE SHADOW LEFT.
LAST NIGHT WE WERE TOLD TO GO TO BED WHEN WE STILL WANTED TO PLAY MORE
SHEESH.
STOMP
STOMP
OKAY, IT'S ATTACHED.

BUT...
DON'T CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR KURO-CHA.
THAT'S RIGHT, SANJU.


WHAT'S UP, KUTO?
.....
WELL...
...MY BODY HURTS ALL OVER.

SHE'S REALLY GETTING INTO BEING THE OLDER SISTER.
LOOKS LIKE HER SENSE OF SELF IS DEVELOPING TOO.
LISTEN TO YOUR OLDER SISTER.
NO BUTS.

DID SOMETHING HAPPEN BETWEEN YOU AND SANJU?
IS IT FROM SOMETHING I DID YESTERDAY?
YOU'RE BEING HIT.


SIT HERE.
GIVE ME YOUR HAND.

DID YOU SLEEP WELL?
NO PROBLEM. I DIDN'T DO MUCH.
THANK YOU FOR LETTING US STAY.

CANDY.
TRY IT.
WHAT'S THIS?

THAT'S RIGHT, YOU CAN BUY ANYTHING AT MY STORE.
IS THIS WHAT THEY CALL A "STORE"?
MANY THINGS.
UNFORTUNATELY, NO BANDAGES.
DO YOU HAVE HEXAMINE AND BANDAGES?

.....
MUNCH
MUNCH

SORRY, THIS PERSON RIGHT HERE IS SAYING NO.
MAYBE NEXT TIME.
ME TOO!
I WANT SOMETHING TOO!

!
PERK
I'M GLAD YOU LIKE IT.

NO, IT'S UP TO THE CASH.
IT'S UP TO KUROCHA?
WHAT?
hrsh!

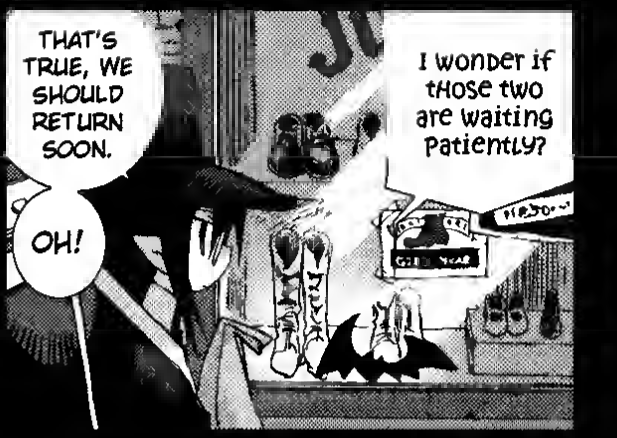
SFX: BLUNTLY

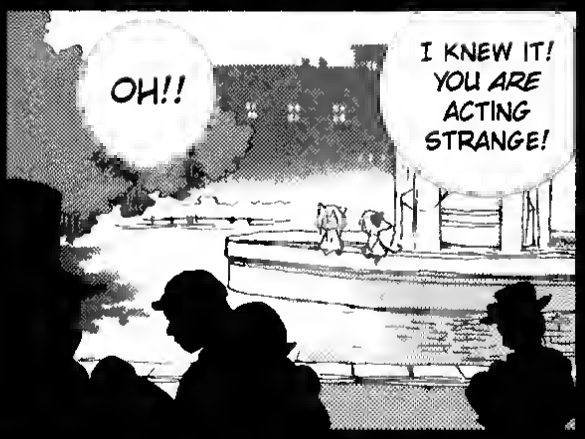
SANJU, YOU'RE ACTING WEIRD.
THAT'S NOT TRUE.
I JUST WISH THE PROFESSOR WAS HERE.
PROFESSOR?
KURO-CHA, HOW LONG DO WE WAIT?
SO CAN YOU TWO WAIT HERE?
WE HAVE SOME BUSINESS TO TAKE CARE OF.
EH!?
I'VE DECIDED!
I'M NOT GOING TO RELY ON KURO-CHAN.
I'LL TRAVEL ALONE.
I'LL FIND THE PROFESSOR MYSELF.
IF YOU CAN WAIT UNTIL THEN, I'LL GIVE YOU MORE CANDY.
WE'LL BE BACK BY THE TIME THE SKY TURNS RED.
OKAY!
OKAY.
I'LL TELL KURO-CHA.
THAT'S WHY I'M GOING.
TAKE CARE.
CAN I HAVE YOUR "CANDY" TOO?
DID YOU UNDER-STAND TOO, SANJU?
I'LL LEAVE AFTER KURO-CHAN COMES BACK.
.....
SO, NOW THEY'RE GO-ING THROUGH ADOLESCENCE?
.....
TURN
ふぃ

I HEARD THE PROFESSOR'S VOICE...
.....
SANJU, WHY ARE YOU BEING FIDGETY?
...I THINK.

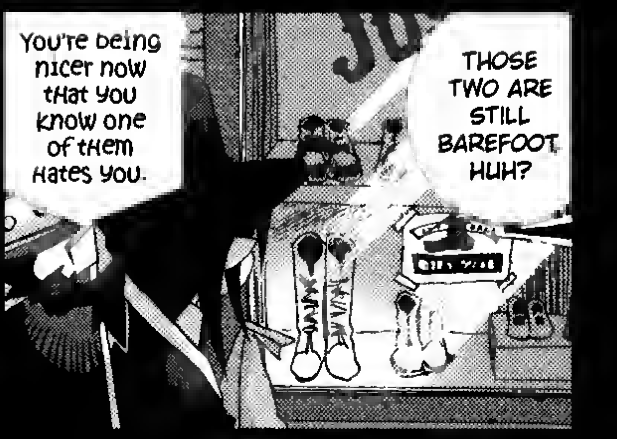
AND THERE AREN'T MANY CLUES IN THIS TOWN EITHER.
...I BOUGHT THE BANDAGES...
LET'S GO.

I HEARD IT.
I CAN'T HEAR IT.
?
I SMELL HIM TOO...
...I THINK.


THAT'S TRUE, WE SHOULD RETURN SOON.
OH!
I WONDER IF THOSE TWO ARE WAITING PATIENTLY?

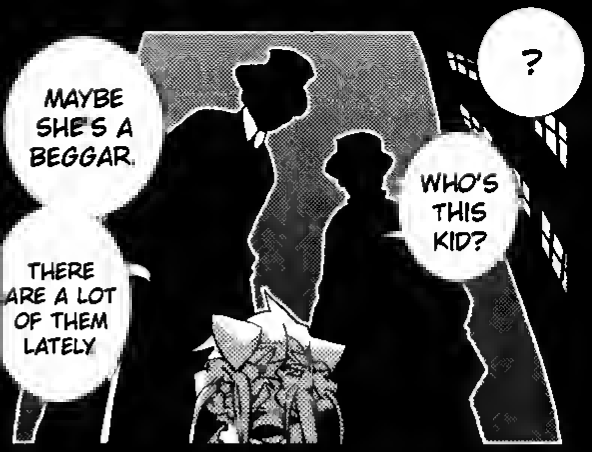

OH!!
I KNEW IT! YOU ARE ACTING STRANGE!

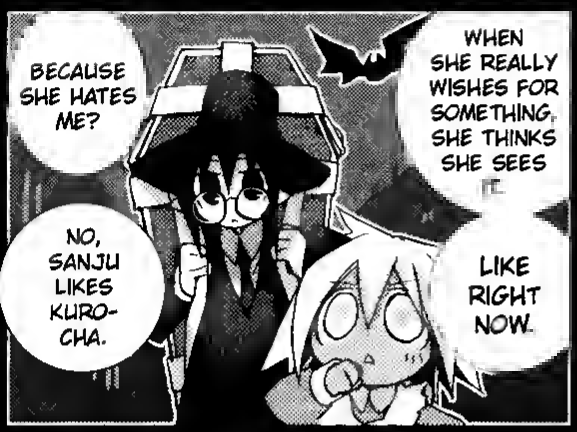
SANJU?
THAT'S THE PROFESSOR!!
DASH


YOU'RE BEING NICER NOW THAT YOU KNOW ONE OF THEM HATES YOU.
THOSE TWO ARE STILL BAREFOOT HUH?

I ALREADY TOLD THEM...
...THAT THEY "CAN'T SEE PROFESSOR" AND "HE WENT TO A DIFFERENT WORLD."
PANT
PANT
ABOUT WHAT?
About their professor.
When are you going to tell them the truth?
PROFESSOR!
HUG
.....
I HAVE NO INTENTION OF SAYING ANYTHING.
They still believe they can see him again.
SFX: TAP TAP TAP
THE REST IS UP TO THEM. THEY NEED TO FIND THE ANSWER FOR THEMSELVES.
THOSE KIDS STILL DON'T KNOW A LOT OF THINGS...
...INCLUDING...
...THE MEANING OF PEOPLE "DYING."
IT'LL...
...PROBABLY TAKE TIME.

SANJU LEFT?
What happened?
SHE LEFT SAYING SHE FOUND THE PROFESSOR.
BUT IT WASN'T HIM AT ALL.


?
WHO'S THIS KID?
MAYBE SHE'S A BEGGAR.
THERE ARE A LOT OF THEM LATELY.


WHEN SHE REALLY WISHES FOR SOMETHING, SHE THINKS SHE SEES IT.
LIKE RIGHT NOW.
BECAUSE SHE HATES ME?
NO, SANJU LIKES KURO-CHA.

IT WASN'T...
...THE PROFESSOR.

BUT SHE LIKES THE PROFESSOR MORE.
THE PROFESSOR USED TO BRAID HER HAIR.
!

OH NO.
SHE STARTED CRYING.
DAMMIT. HERE, TAKE THIS GOLD COIN.

SANJU IS WAITING FOR PROFESSOR TO FIX IT.
BUT SHE CAN'T SEE HIM YET.

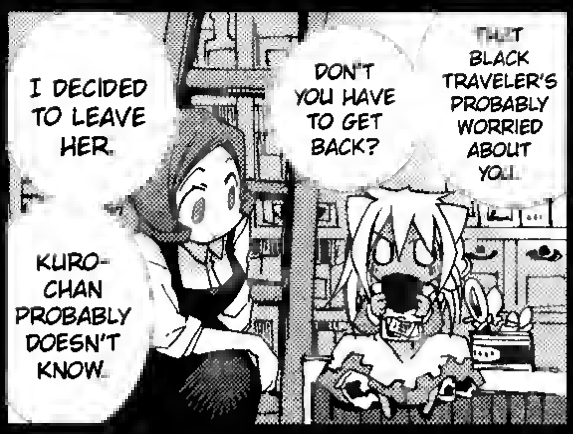
JUST HURRY UP AND LEAVE.

HEY, CAN YOU GUYS HOLD UP?
HUH? WHY'RE YOU WALKING SO SLOW, KUTO?
.....
OH? WELCOME.
I WAS ABOUT TO CLOSE UP.
WELL, ACTUALLY...
...I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT I FEEL LIKE SOMEONE'S PULLING ME.
HUH!?
OH WELL.
WHAT CAN I BUY WITH THIS SHINY THING?
ARE YOU HERE BY YOURSELF?
HM? WHAT?
!!
OH!
LIKE SOMEONE'S TUGGING ON MY CLOTHES.
MY! WITH THIS?
YOU CAN BUY ANYTHING IN THE STORE WITH THIS.
THEN...
RUB
RUB
SANJU?
?
...AND PROFES-SOR.
...CANDY, CANDY...

HE WOULD HIT MY EARS WITH THE BRUSH, OR PULL MY HAIR.
BUT HE WAS HORRIBLE AT BRAIDING MY HAIR.
...USED TO ALWAYS TIE MY LONG HAIR.
THE PROFESSOR...
...AND MY FAVORITEST TIME.
IT WAS MY WORST...
...WHEN I COULD HAVE THE PROFESSOR ALL TO MYSELF.
IT WAS JUST A LITTLE TIME..

IS SANJU IN TROUBLE?
...Like she can't come back because she had a fight with you.
I'm sure she has her reasons...
YOU GAVE UP, HUH?
OW...
THEN I'LL BRING HER BACK!
Even if it's only her shadow
Well, at least we found Sanju.
KURO-CHA, YOU WAIT HERE.
I'LL GO WITH HER SHADOW AND GET HER
COS I'M THE BIG SISTER.
HOW?
WANT TO GO LOOK?
WHERE'S HER ACTUAL BODY?
THE SHADOW JUST needs to take us to its owner.
THEN you go with the stupid ideas.
...WHERE SANJU IS
WE JUST NEED TO ASK THIS SANJU...
SO... WHERE'S SANJU?
YOU DIDN'T BRING HER.
SHE WASN'T IN TROUBLE AT ALL!
FLUME
FLUME
Let! me! go!
OW, OW OWWWW.
TUG
TUG
TUG
TUG

I thought you were the older sister.
IT'S NOT FAIR.
SHE'S POUTING.
WELL, AT LEAST WE KNOW SHE'S SAFE.


I DECIDED TO LEAVE HER.
DON'T YOU HAVE TO GET BACK?
THAT BLACK TRAVELER'S PROBABLY WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
KURO-CHAN PROBABLY DOESN'T KNOW.

TO TELL THE TRUTH, I THOUGHT SHE'D LEAVE TOWN...
...TO FIND THE PROFESSOR.
I THOUGHT SO, TOO.

MUNCH
BUT IT'S DANGEROUS TO TRAVEL BY YOURSELF WHEN YOU'RE SO YOUNG.
I'M GOING TO TRAVEL ON MY OWN NOW.
LET'S SEE...
...IF YOU DON'T WANT TO GO BACK...
MUNCH

YOU KNOW, KURO.
I KNEW I SHOULDN'T HAVE...
MAYBE I SHOULDN'T HAVE BROKEN THEM OUT AND BROUGHT THEM HERE.
I UNDERSTAND HOW YOU FEEL.

...HOW ABOUT YOU STAY HERE AND BE MY CHILD FOR A WHILE?
CHILD?
WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I'M A CHILD?

But don't say that in front of the kids.

I'LL DO IT!!
YOU CAN EAT ALL THE CANDY AND SNACKS YOU WANT.

HM? WHAT'S WRONG?
.....?
I JUST FELT SOMETHING.
FAULT COOKIED
SHE'S WORRYING ABOUT MAKING UP WITH THAT SANJU OVER THERE.
WHAT'S WRONG, KURO-CHAN?
OH!
PHEW.
FOR WHAT?
SO IT MUST BE TIME.
IT SHOULD BE...
...SANJU OVER HERE!
THEN YOU JUST HAVE TO ASK...
JUST SO YOU KNOW, THE FIRST PERSON SHE ASKED TO HELP HER...
.....
...WAS YOU.
OH, RIGHT. THE CANDY.
SQUEEZE
SAN-JU...
...CAN YOU TAKE ME TO WHERE YOU ARE?

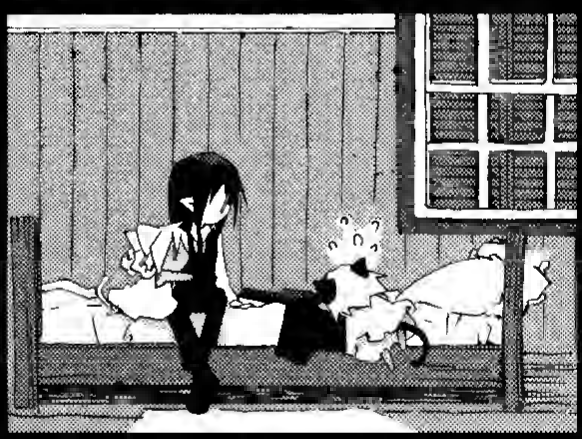
Phew. What a tiring day.
But I'm sure this is going to happen all the time...
...as long as those kids are with us.
I'm sorry she caused you trouble.
I'm glad you finally came for her.
You didn't bring them along so you could take the place of the Professor.
Of course.
But I probably can't do any more for them now than the Professor can.
Don't worry about it. It's already paid for.
You can take this.
?
Oh, thank you.
What you can do for them...
...is show them how to walk on the street or help them change clothes.
But I think that's fine.
Oh, my.
That makes me happy, but it's not good to be so stubborn.
I'm not going!
I'm a child of this house!
And scold them about only eating one candy a day.
Strictly...
Except for you.
...who wouldn't smile, even with all the candy in my store.
I've never seen a child...

SFX, SNIFF SNIFF

キィ
CREAK

KURO-CHAN...
...PROFESSOR DIDN'T LEAVE COS HE DIDN'T NEED ME ANY MORE, DID HE?

I... I...
...I WANT TO SEE HIM...



YEAH.
I KNOW.

IT'S OKAY!
I THOUGHT YOU WERE THE BIG SISTER?

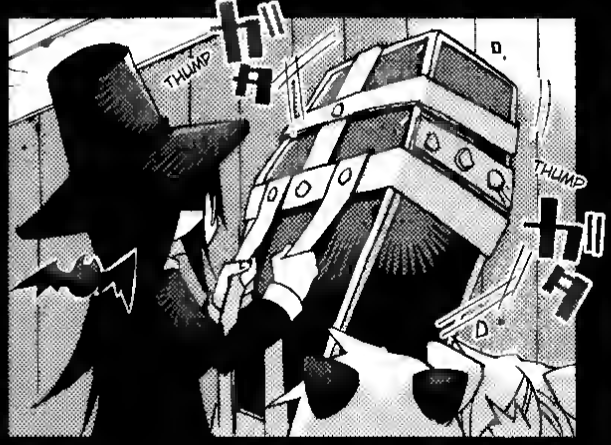
I KNOW, SANJU.

OKAY, LET'S GO.
DID YOU GET EVERY-THING?
YEAH!
THE SHADOW IS GONE AGAIN.

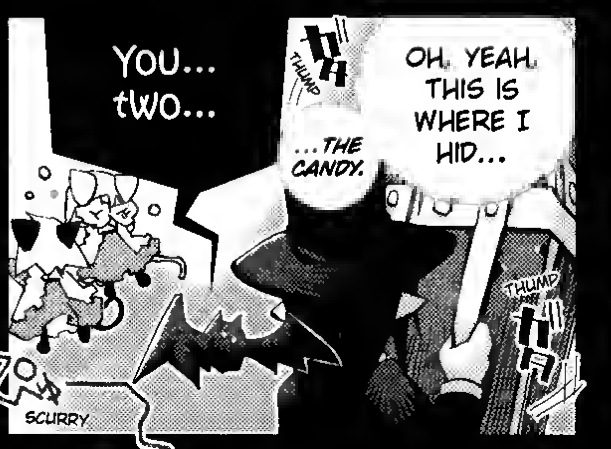
You're organizing your stuff now?
OH!
YEAH.
I THOUGHT I SHOULD DO IT BE-FORE I GO TO BED.

THE SHADOW?
AGAIN
YEAH.
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHERE IT IS?

I BOUGHT A LOT OF STUFF TODAY.
ALTHOUGH THE SHOPPING WAS CUT SHORT...
AND I NEED TO HIDE THE CANDY FROM THE KIDS.
AHaHa, tHat's true.


THUMP
THUMP

...OH!
OH! I FORGOT ABOUT THESE.


YOU... tWO...
THUMP
...THE CANDY.
OH. YEAH. THIS IS WHERE I HID...
THUMP
SCURRY

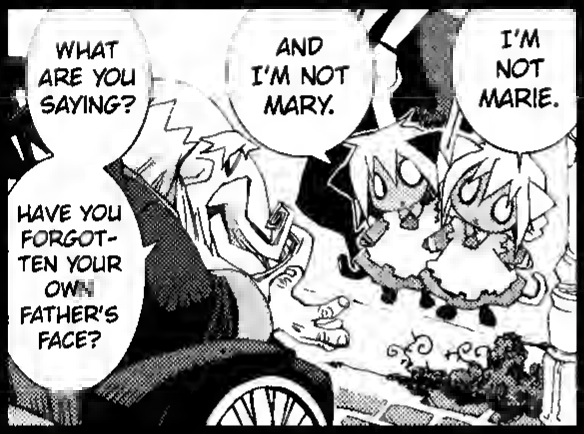
It's one more thing you can do for them.

I HAVE COFFEE, BUT...
I'LL ALSO HAVE SOME COFFEE BEANS AND CANDY.
OH, WELCOME, BELUI-SAN.
WOULD YOU LIKE BREAD AND THREAD?
...I'M SORRY, I ONLY HAVE THIS MUCH CANDY TODAY.
OH, MY.
IT'S UNUSUAL FOR YOU TO RUN OUT OF CANDY.
DID SOME-ONE BUY IT ALL?
OH, PERFECT TIMING.
BELUI-SAN, WOULD YOU MIND WAIT-ING A BIT?
HELLO. I'VE GOT A DELIVERY.
UM, IS THIS THE PLACE?

I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A LONELIER FUNERAL.
BUT I GUESS HE WAS WELL LIKED.
THE STORY STARTS A LITTLE WHILE BACK.
A PERSON WHO MET A WITCH?
YES.
I HEARD THERE WAS SOMEONE AROUND HERE...
BUT BE CAREFUL.
THAT OLD MAN'S PRETTY ECCENTRIC.
I'D THINK THE ONLY PERSON WHO WOULD SAY THAT IS THE OLD MAN FROM THE IVY-COVERED MANSION.
?
OH, THAT'S WHY YOU HAVE TWINS WITH YOU.
More peculiar than this one?
UH, ABOUT EVEN.
Then the old man must be really weird
HEY.

...AREN'T YOU TWO MARIE AND MARY?
OH!? NOW THAT I LOOK CLOSER...
?

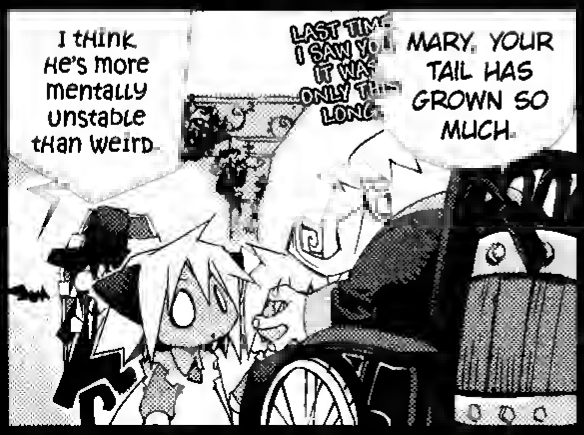
THIS MANSION MUST BE IT.
LET'S HOPE WE FIND SOMETHING THIS TIME.

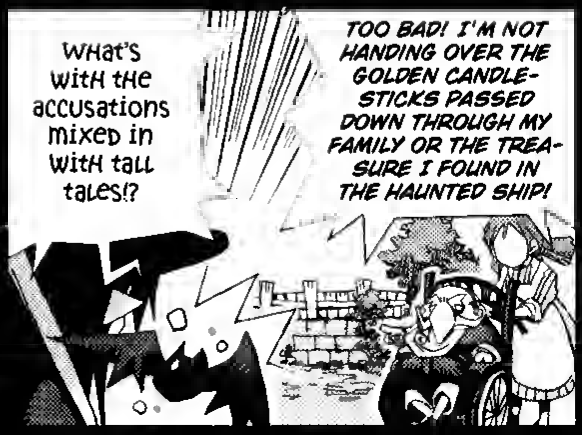

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
AND I'M NOT MARY.
I'M NOT MARIE.
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN YOUR OWN FATHER'S FACE?

HALT, YOU SUSPICIOUS BUNCH!!
HUH?

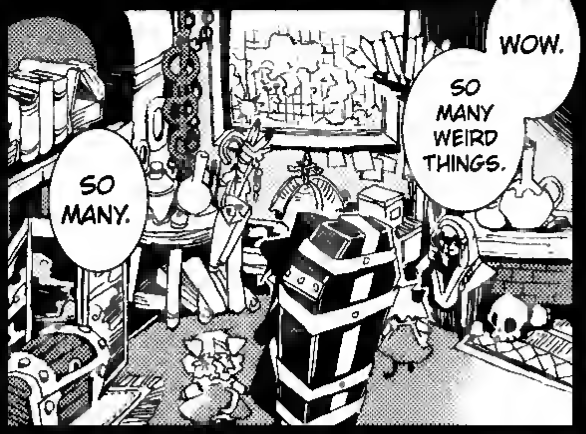
HE SURE IS A WEIRD MAN, AS WE HEARD.
??
COME OVER HERE AND LET ME TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT YOU.

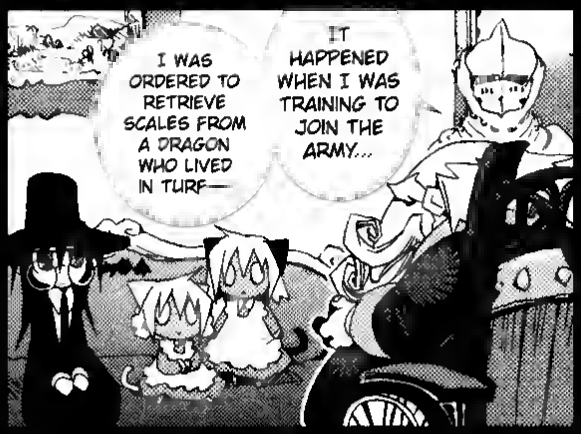
YOU'RE PRETENDING TO BE A MORTICIAN TO CON MONEY OUT OF ME, RIGHT?
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE UP TO!

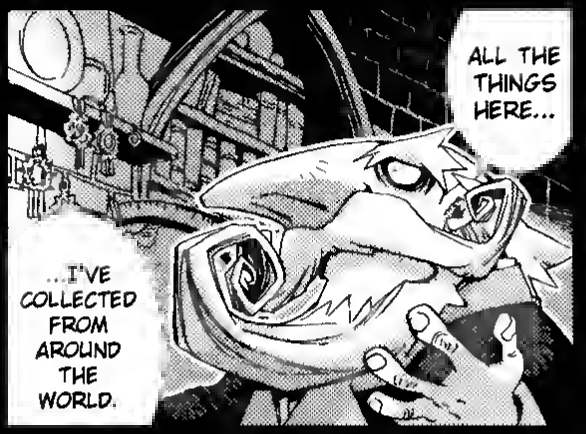

I THINK HE'S MORE MENTALLY UNSTABLE THAN WEIRD.
LAST TIME I SAW YOU IT WAS ONLY THIS LONG.
MARY, YOUR TAIL HAS GROWN SO MUCH.


WHAT'S WITH THE ACCUSATIONS MIXED IN WITH TALL TALES!?
TOO BAD! I'M NOT HANDING OVER THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICKS PASSED DOWN THROUGH MY FAMILY OR THE TREASURE I FOUND IN THE HAUNTED SHIP!

OH! HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT SECRET!?
WE HEARD THAT YOU MET A WITCH.
Let's get to the point, Kuro.
FINE. I'LL TELL YOU THE STORY EXCLUSIVELY.


WOW.
SO MANY WEIRD THINGS.
SO MANY.


I WAS ORDERED TO RETRIEVE SCALES FROM A DRAGON WHO LIVED IN TURF—
IT HAPPENED WHEN I WAS TRAINING TO JOIN THE ARMY...


ALL THE THINGS HERE...
...I'VE COLLECTED FROM AROUND THE WORLD.

SO AS I WAS FALLING UPSIDE-DOWN I MADE A PUDDLE WITH RED WINE AND JUMPED IN IT—
WHEN I PASSED THE 583RD MOUNTAIN PASS AS THE KING HAD ORDERED ME A COMET WITH A HORSESHOE—
THE PEOPLE OF THAT COUNTRY WORE BLACK AND WHITE CATS ON THEIR HEADS DAILY—

THIS IS TO THANK YOU FOR FINDING MY DEAREST ALICE AND SYLVIE.
OH. I MUST THANK THE MORTICIAN.
I'M NOT A MORTICIAN.
SYLVIE? ALICE?

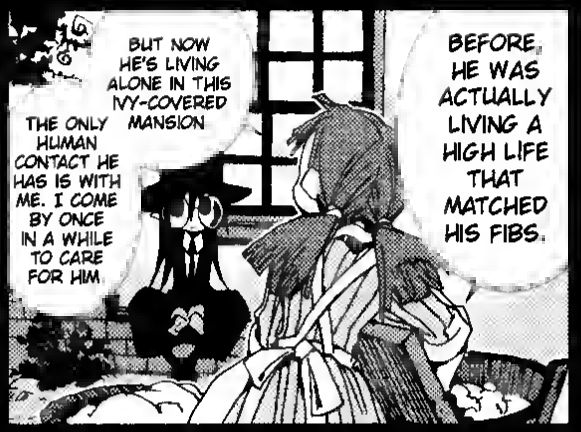
I was about to leave right now!!
Hey, that's not fair!!
MAKE SURE TO HEAR EVERY WORD.
I'LL LEAVE THE REST TO YOU, SEN.
THAT WAS WHEN A GIANT WHALE WITH A CASTLE ON ITS BACK APPEARED!!

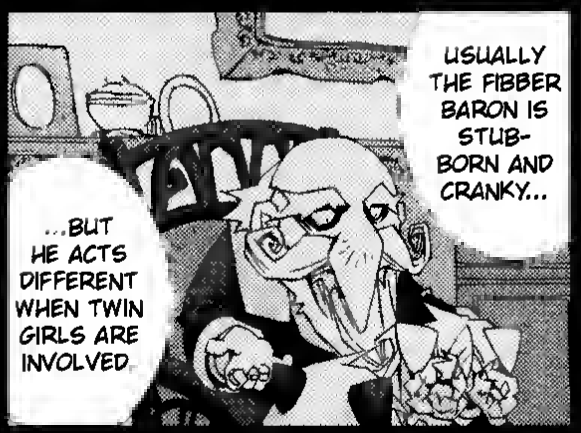
IT LOOKS LIKE IT WAS CONSTRUCTED WITH WAX.
A PURE SILVER CROSS!!
THIS IS SOMETHING I RECEIVED FROM SIR MUNCHAUSEN WHEN I FOUGHT BRAVELY IN THE HOLY WAR.
AND SILVER DOESN'T RUST THIS BADLY, DOES IT?

...WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH THE TWINS? THE PERSON I SPOKE WITH FIRST MENTIONED IT AS WELL.
HMM?
BY THE WAY...

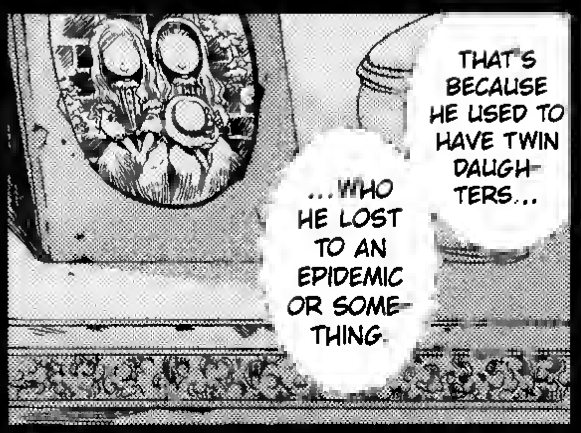
THE FIBBER BARON!?
YES.
THAT'S WHAT EVERYONE IN THIS VILLAGE CALLS HIM.
NOT THAT HE'S A REAL BARON.

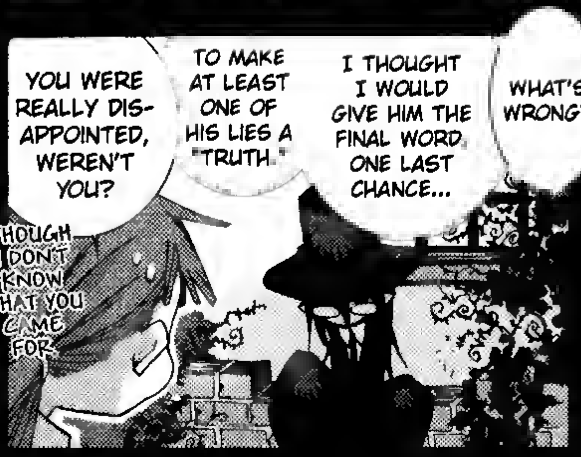
THAT OLD MAN ACTS THAT WAY WITH ANY SET OF TWINS.
PUR-POSE...
OH, YOU DIDN'T KNOW?
I THOUGHT YOU DID IT ON PURPOSE.


BUT NOW HE'S LIVING ALONE IN THIS IVY-COVERED MANSION
THE ONLY HUMAN CONTACT HE HAS IS WITH ME. I COME BY ONCE IN A WHILE TO CARE FOR HIM.
BEFORE, HE WAS ACTUALLY LIVING A HIGH LIFE THAT MATCHED HIS FIBS.

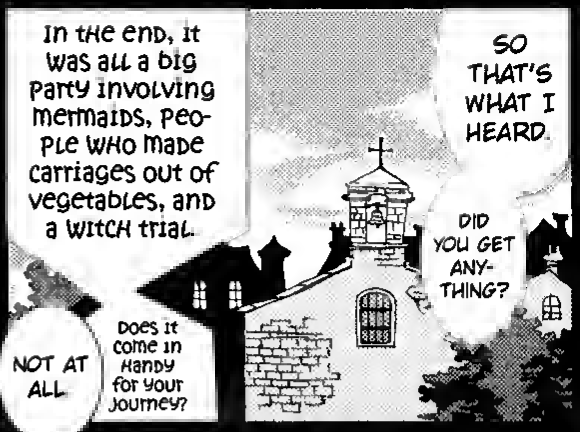

USUALLY THE FIBBER BARON IS STUB-BORN AND CRANKY...
...BUT HE ACTS DIFFERENT WHEN TWIN GIRLS ARE INVOLVED.

HE ONLY TELLS LIES...
...SO YOU SHOULDN'T GET TOO INVOLVED WITH HIM.

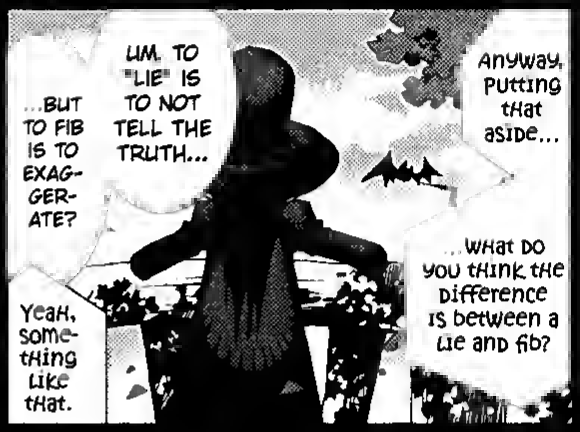

THAT'S BECAUSE HE USED TO HAVE TWIN DAUGH-TERS...
...WHO HE LOST TO AN EPIDEMIC OR SOME-THING.


WHAT'S WRONG?
I THOUGHT I WOULD GIVE HIM THE FINAL WORD. ONE LAST CHANCE...
TO MAKE AT LEAST ONE OF HIS LIES A "TRUTH."
YOU WERE REALLY DIS-APPOINTED, WEREN'T YOU?
THOUGH I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU CAME FOR.

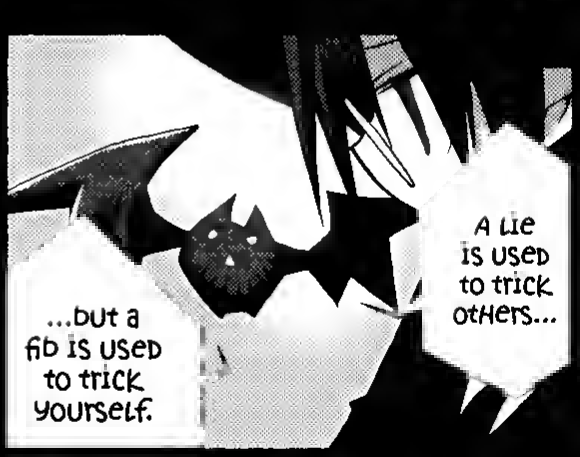
TA-DAI-MA.
OH, KURO-CHAN IS BACK.
NO, WE'RE THE ONES WHO SAY "TADAIMA."


SO THAT'S WHAT I HEARD.
DID YOU GET ANY-THING?
IN THE END, IT WAS ALL A BIG PARTY INVOLVING MERMAIDS, PEO-PLE WHO MADE CARRIAGES OUT OF VEGETABLES, AND A WITCH TRIAL.
DOES IT COME IN HANDY FOR YOUR JOURNEY?
NOT AT ALL.

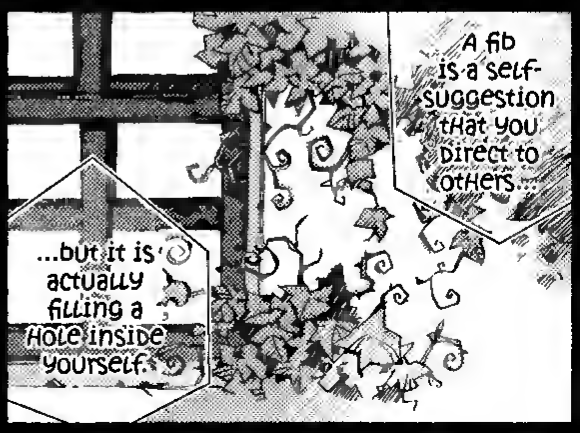
OKAERI?
YES, GOOD JOB.
LISTEN, KURO-CHAN.

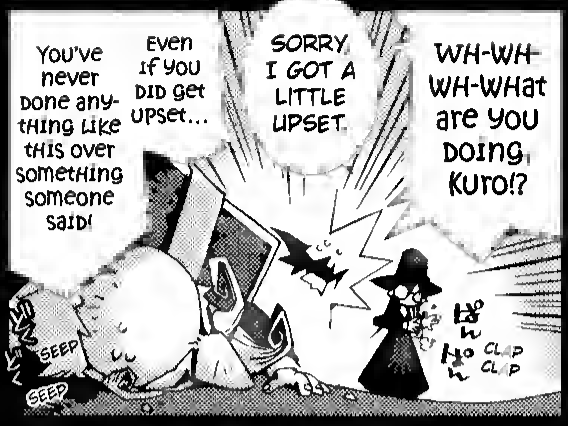

ANYWAY, PUTTING THAT ASIDE...
UM. TO "LIE" IS TO NOT TELL THE TRUTH...
...BUT TO FIB IS TO EXAG-GER-ATE?
YEAH, SOME-THING LIKE THAT.
...WHAT DO YOU THINK THE DIFFERENCE IS BETWEEN A LIE AND FIB?

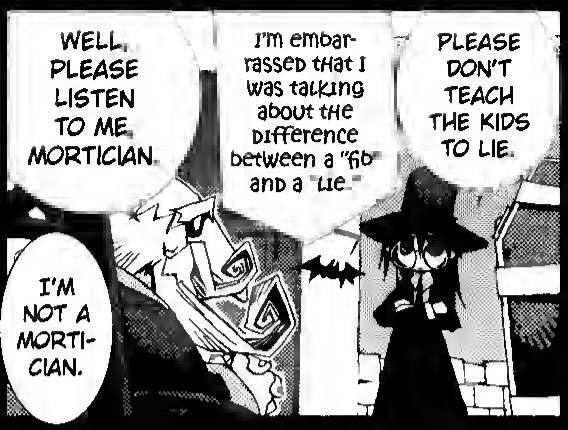
WE'RE GOING TO BE THE OJII-CHAN'S FOSTER KIDS.
SO WE CAN'T TRAVEL WITH YOU ANYMORE...


A LIE IS USED TO TRICK OTHERS...
...BUT A FIB IS USED TO TRICK YOURSELF.

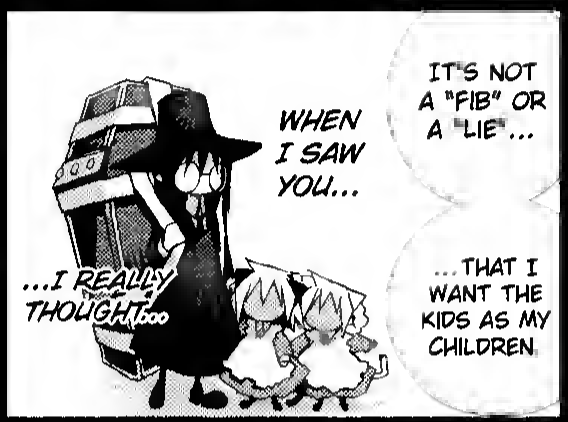
I SEE.
...IS WHAT OJII-CHAN TOLD US TO TELL YOU.
DANG.
WHAT'S FOSTER KID?

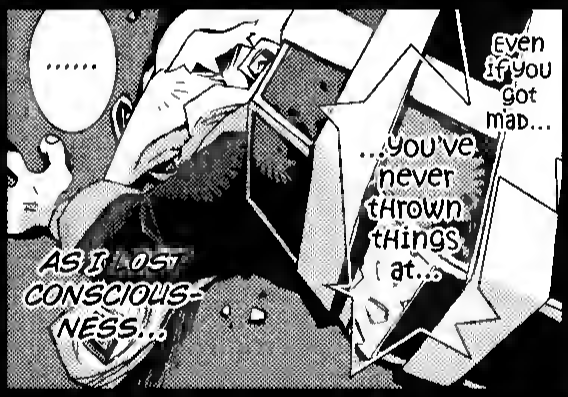

A FIB IS A SELF-SUGGESTION THAT YOU DIRECT TO OTHERS...
...BUT IT IS ACTUALLY FILLING A HOLE INSIDE YOURSELF.

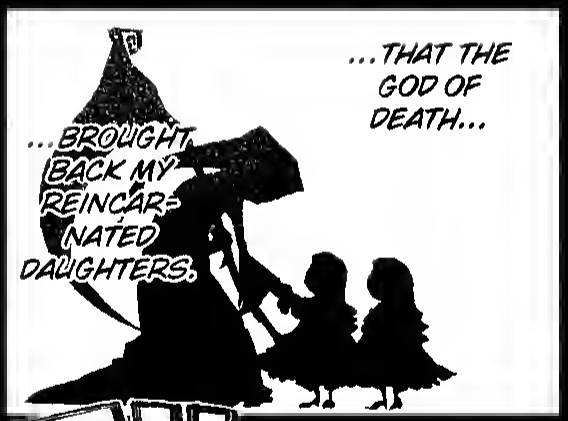

You've never done anything like this over something someone said!
Even if you DID get upset...
SORRY, I GOT A LITTLE UPSET.
WH-WH-WH-WHat are you doing, Kuro!?
SEEP
SEEP
CLIP CLIP

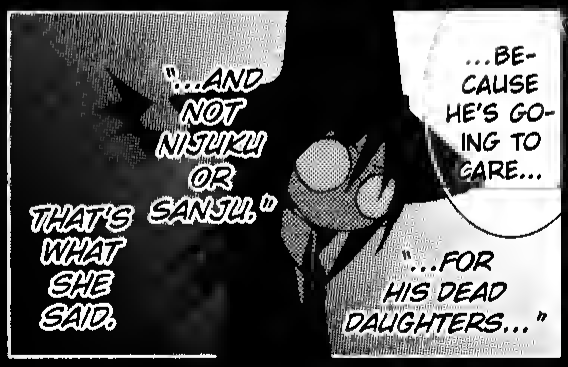

WELL, PLEASE LISTEN TO ME, MORTICIAN.
I'm embarrassed that I was talking about the difference between a "fib" and a "lie."
PLEASE DON'T TEACH THE KIDS TO LIE.
I'M NOT A MORTICIAN.

Well, it IS the first time you were called a god of death.
I'M NOT MAD ABOUT THAT.
THEN WHat gives?


WHEN I SAW YOU...
...I REALLY THOUGHT...
IT'S NOT A "FIB" OR A "LIE"...
...THAT I WANT THE KIDS AS MY CHILDREN.

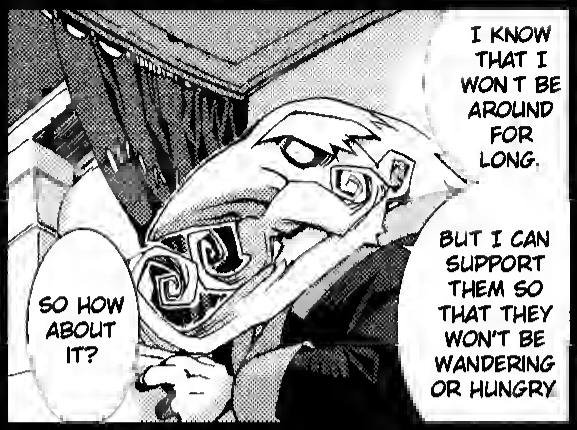

.....
AS I LOST CONSCIOUSNESS...
...you've never thrown things at...
Even if you got mad...


...THAT THE GOD OF DEATH...
...BROUGHT BACK MY REINCARNATED DAUGHTERS.


"...AND NOT NISUKU OR SANJU."
THAT'S WHAT SHE SAID.
...BECAUSE HE'S GOING TO CARE...
"...FOR HIS DEAD DAUGHTERS..."

WHAT IS SHE TALKING ABOUT?
TWENTY-NINE AND THIRTY...

OJII-CHAN, YOU LIKE US?
OF COURSE.
YEAH.
WE LIKE OJII-CHAN TOO.
OJII-CHAN'S AWAKE.
OH, HE'S AWAKE.
...WE WANT YOU TO CALL US BY OUR REAL NAMES.
THAT'S WHY...
OH.
IT'S ELLIE AND ZABETH.
LISTEN. LISTEN.
WE HEARD FROM KURO-CHAN.
NOT FAKE NAMES.
AT FIRST WE THOUGHT...
WE DIDN'T TELL KURO-CHAN BEFORE.
...THAT YOU WERE SIMILAR TO PROFESSOR.
OKAY.
GOOD JOB.
...NIJUKU. SANJU.
...OJII-CHAN AND PRO-FESSOR ARE DIFFERENT.
BUT SIMILAR DOESN'T MEAN THE SAME.
THERE'S ONLY ONE OF HIM. THAT'S WHY HE'S OUR PROFESSOR.
JUST LIKE SANJU AND I ARE DIF-FERENT...


I KNOW THAT I WON'T BE AROUND FOR LONG.
BUT I CAN SUPPORT THEM SO THAT THEY WON'T BE WANDERING OR HUNGRY
SO HOW ABOUT IT?

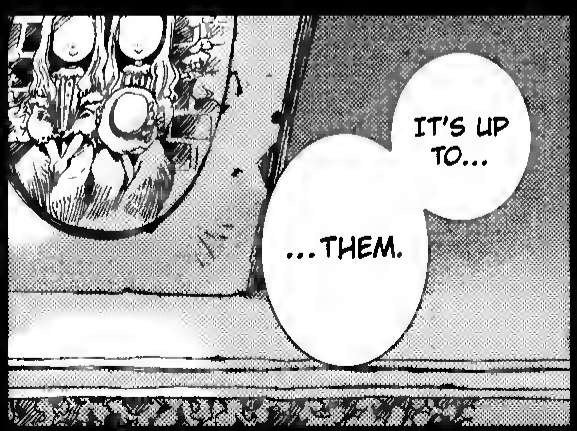
REALLY.
AFTER MY DAUGHTERS, OF COURSE.
THEY'RE GOOD KIDS.

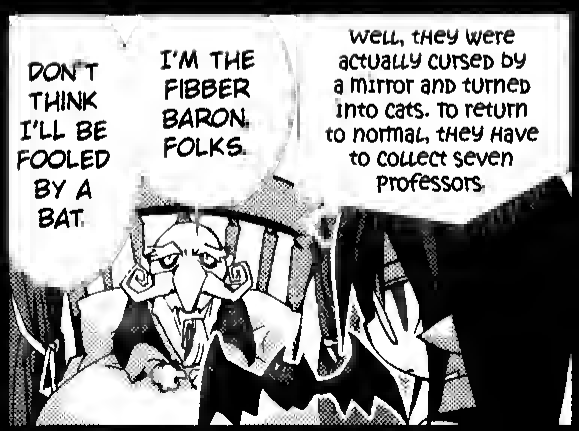
CAN YOU RECONSIDER LETTING ME ADOPT THEM?

WHY ARE THOSE KIDS TRAVELING WITH YOU?
SAY, MORTI-CIAN.
I'M NOT A MORTI-CIAN.
So you do know that we're travelers.

.....
THAT'S NOT FOR ME TO DECIDE.

BECAUSE THEY DON'T HAVE A GUARDIAN.
THEY THINK THAT THEY'RE SEARCHING FOR THEIR PROFES-SOR...
...BUT HE'S...
You're being too honest.


IT'S UP TO...
...THEM.


DON'T THINK I'LL BE FOOLED BY A BAT.
I'M THE FIBBER BARON, FOLKS.
Well, they were actually cursed by a mirror and turned into cats. To return to normal, they have to collect seven professors.

THE ONLY THING WE KNOW IS THAT HE LOST HIS TWIN DAUGHTERS.
NO ONE KNOWS THE REAL IDENTITY OF THE FIBBER BARON.
HE'S FAMOUS AROUND HERE AS "THE FIBBER BARON"!!
THAT OLD MAN FROM THE IVY-COVERED MANSION?
HEY, YOU!! STOP LAZING AROUND AND GET TO WORK!!
SO ANYWAY, THAT OLD MAN...
...IS PRETTY ATTACHED TO TWIN GIRLS...
A KING, A MOON, HE'D MIX THEM UP TO CREATE A TALE OF TRIUMPH.
A CRANKY OLD MAN WHO FIBS ALL THE TIME.
BECOME OJII-CHAN'S CHILDREN?

OJII-CHAN!
.....
...Let's tell the old man and get out of this village.
since we've decided...
CLICK
ガチャ

YOU'LL LIVE WITH THAT OLD MAN HERE.
WE'RE GOING TO BE CHILDREN?
WHAT HAPPENS THEN?

UGH...
!?

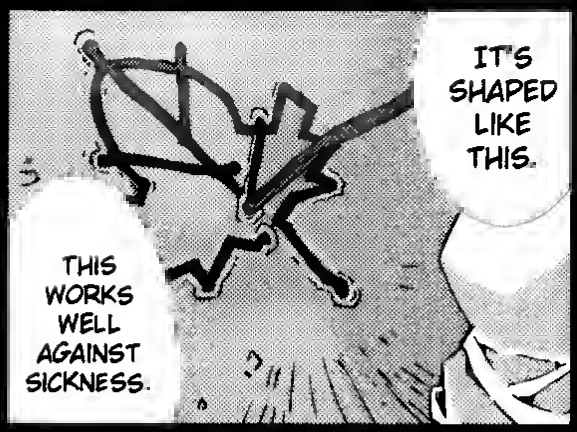
NO, WE'LL be separated.
WITH KURO-CHA TOO?

ARE YOU OKAY?
What's wrong!?
UGH, MY ILL-NESS...

BECAUSE WE HAVE TO TRAVEL WITH KURO-CHAN...
...AND LOOK FOR PROFES-SOR
THEN WE WON'T DO IT.

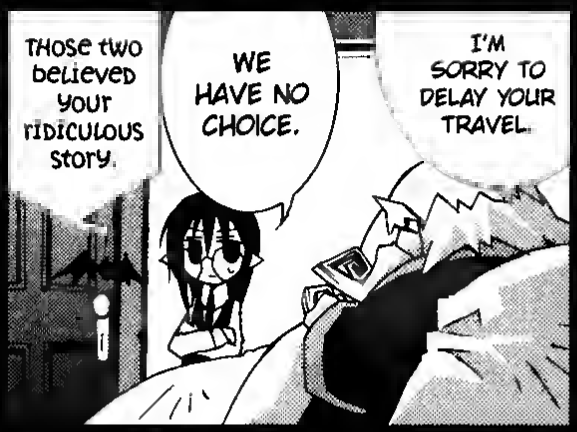
That's his next move, eh...
I CAN'T BREATHE WHEN CHILDREN ARE AWAY FROM ME...
SNEAK

But you're relieved, right?
SHUT UP.
You're a little relieved but conflicted and a little disappointed, too?


IT'S SHAPED LIKE THIS.
THIS WORKS WELL AGAINST SICKNESS.

Maybe he heard us talking in the other room?
WELL, I KNEW WE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO LEAVE SO EASILY.

OOH...
OOH...
IT'S REAAAA-AAAAALLY BITTER.
SO IF YOU BITE ITS STEM, YOU CAN TELL.

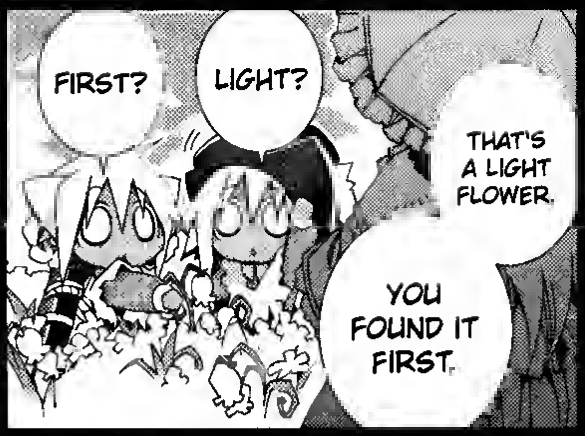

THOSE TWO believed YOUR RIDICULOUS STORY.
WE HAVE NO CHOICE.
I'M SORRY TO DELAY YOUR TRAVEL.

THANK YOU FOR TELLING US.
I SEE.
NO PROB-LEM.

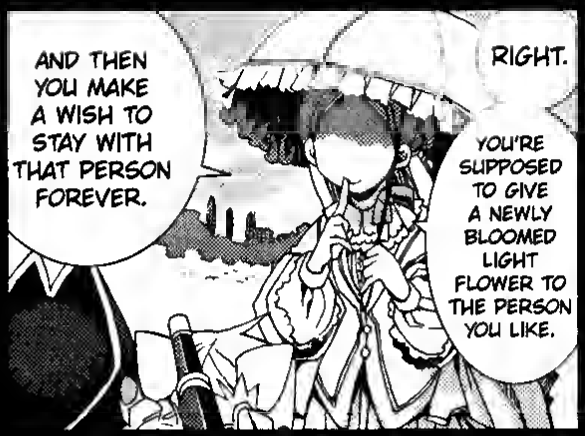
His stories are endless.
I GOT INFECTED WHEN I WAS A SOLDIER ON THE BATTLE-FIELD...
RIDICU-LOUS? THIS BURGHER SYNDROME IS REAL.
BLAB
BLAB
BLAB
THE NAME OF THE DISEASE JUST CHANGE!
HERE WE GO AGAIN.

?
OKAY!!
OKAY!?
I'LL MAKE MEDICINE THAT'S SO BITTER, IT'LL GET RID OF HIS FAKE ILL-NESS WITH A SWIFT KICK!
GET A LOT OF THEM, OKAY?

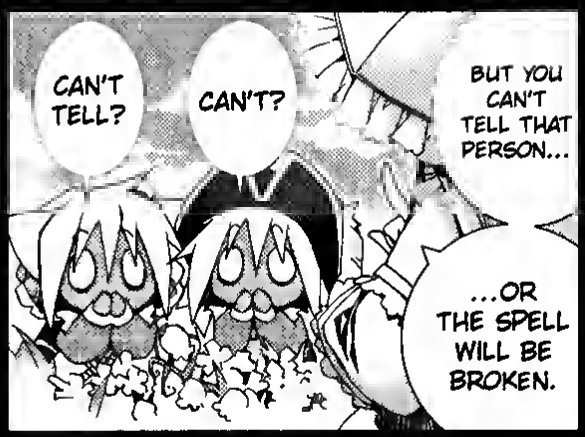
If you want to give him the final blow, I'll help you.
I GUESS HE'S NEVER GOING TO STOP ATTACK-ING ME.
I THINK IT'S BECAUSE SOMEONE THREW A COFFIN AT ME.
THEN I'LL MAKE IT SHORT.


FIRST?
LIGHT?
THAT'S A LIGHT FLOWER.
YOU FOUND IT FIRST.

YEAH!
SO LET'S START OUR TREASURE HUNT!


AND THEN YOU MAKE A WISH TO STAY WITH THAT PERSON FOREVER.
RIGHT.
YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO GIVE A NEWLY BLOOMED LIGHT FLOWER TO THE PERSON YOU LIKE.

I'M NOT NIJUKU. I'M CAPTAIN.
HEY, NIJUKU.
CAPTAIN, WHAT DO YOU THINK THIS IS?


CAN'T TELL?
CAN'T?
BUT YOU CAN'T TELL THAT PERSON...
...OR THE SPELL WILL BE BROKEN.

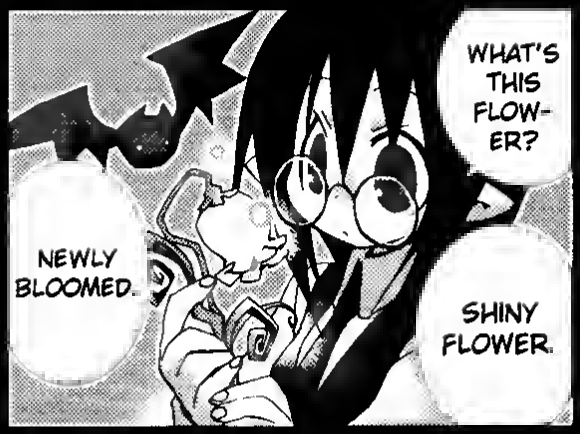
THIS. THIS.
WHAT? WHAT?

YES, A SECRET.
YOU NEED TO KEEP YOUR REAL FEELINGS A SECRET.

DID WE REALLY FIND TREA-SURE?
YEAH.
IT'S A SHINY FLOWER.

ONE MORE THING!
THIS IS FOR YOU.

NO, "okaeri" is what we say.
KURO-CHA, OKAERI.


WHAT'S THIS FLOW-ER?
NEWLY BLOOMED.
SHINY FLOWER.

OH, a sophis-ticated game for you two.
TREASURE HUNT!
WHAT ARE YOU DRESSED FOR?

?
WE CAN NEVER TELL KURO-CHA.
BUT THE REASON WE'RE GIV-ING IT TO YOU IS A SECRET.

THOSE LEAVES !!
WE FOUND A LOT OF MEDICINE!!
SO DID YOU FIND ANY-THING?
FLINCH

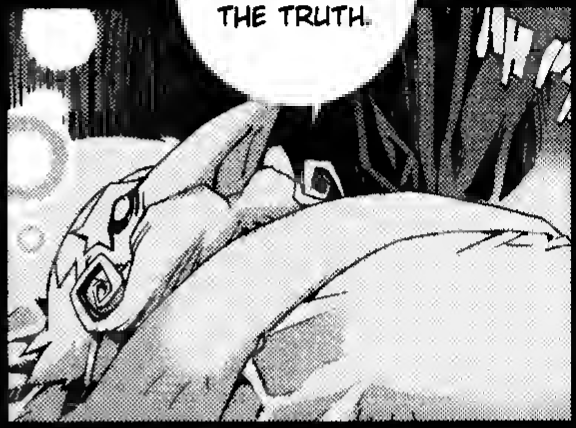
.....
Maybe there's a trick to it.
A SECRET, SHINY FLOWER.

So I guess his fake illness was common.
I DON'T NEED BLATANT LIES.
ACTUALLY, MY KING TOLD ME TO NEVER EAT ANYTHING GREEN AND BITTER, SO...

HONESTLY, I CAN'T EVEN TELL YOU WHICH ONE IS MY WIFE.
THERE WERE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT LEFT ME WITH JUST THIS PICTURE FROM HER CHILDHOOD.
WHY SO SUDDENLY?
HUH!?
NOT SURE.
THEN WHY...
...WERE YOU FIXATED ON TWIN CHILDREN?
GO AHEAD AND CONTINUE YOUR TRIP WITH THOSE GIRLS.
LIKE I SAID.
...OR MAYBE IT WAS MY WAY OF APOLOGIZING TO MY WIFE, FOR WHOM I COULDN'T DO A THING...
...I'M NOT SURE.
MAYBE I WAS SEARCHING FOR A REINCARNATION...
THAT'S THE LIGHT FLOWER MY WIFE USED TO GIVE ME.
THAT FLOWER REMINDED ME.
...SO I DON'T REMEMBER MY TRUE FEELINGS.
I CONTINUED TO LIE...
THIS IS A PICTURE OF MY WIFE WHO DIED EARLY.
I NEVER HAD TWIN DAUGHTERS.

Knew it. That's what gives the Light flower it's name.
OH... A BUG!
YOU SHOULD LEAVE BEFORE IT GETS TOUGHER TO CROSS THE MOUNTAIN.
THE FLOWER'S GLOW MEANS A NEW SEASON IS COMING
SO, THAT'S IT. SORRY TO KEEP YOU HERE.
OKAY.
...THOSE two are starting to HIDE THINGS from us.
But thanks to the influence of the old man...
...CAN I INTERPRET IT AS YOU FINALLY TELLING ME THE TRUTH?
WHAT YOU JUST TOLD ME...
So what's the difference between a lie and a secret?
BUT THIS ISN'T A LIE. IT'S A SECRET.
I CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT THAT WITH MY FIBS.
IF THERE IS A TRUTH HERE, IT'S THE FACT THAT THOSE KIDS CHOSE YOU INSTEAD OF ME.
...PERHAPS.
...A KINDER LIE...
LET'S SEE...
I KNEW YOU WOULD SAY THAT.
Me too.
I DON'T NEED YOU TO FIB NOW.
.....

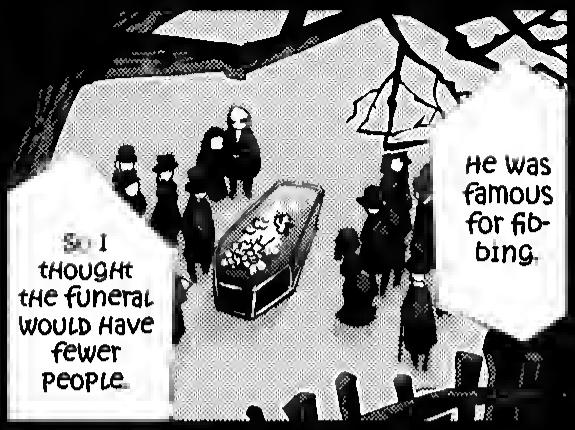
OH YEAH.
HOW DID THE KIDS KNOW ABOUT THE LIGHT FLOWER?
I NEVER TOLD THEM THE TRUTH.



I SEE.
IT WAS YOU...

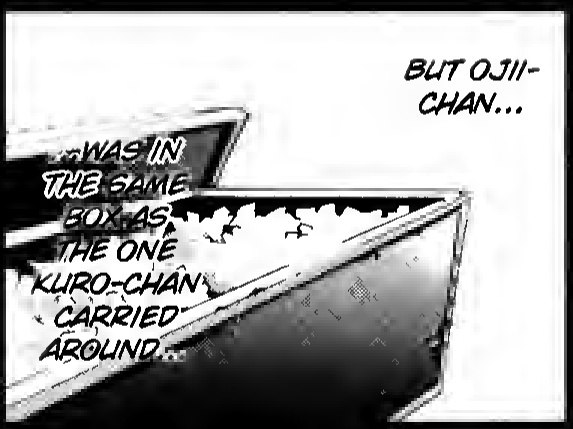
I'M TIRED OF TELL-ING FIBS.
CAN YOU TAKE ME ALREADY?

THAT'S WHY THE OTHER PEOPLE ARE SAYING THEIR FINAL GOODBYES.
HE'S THERE, BUT NOT THERE ANYMORE.

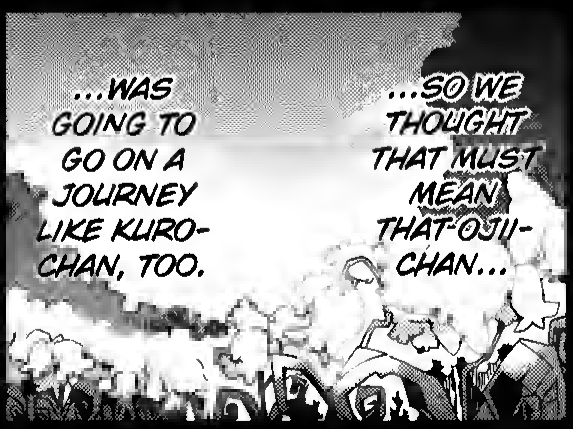

So I thought the funeral would have fewer people.
He was famous for fibbing.

WE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT THAT MEANT.
HMM...
HE'S THERE... BUT NOT THERE.

TRUE.
But I guess he was well liked.

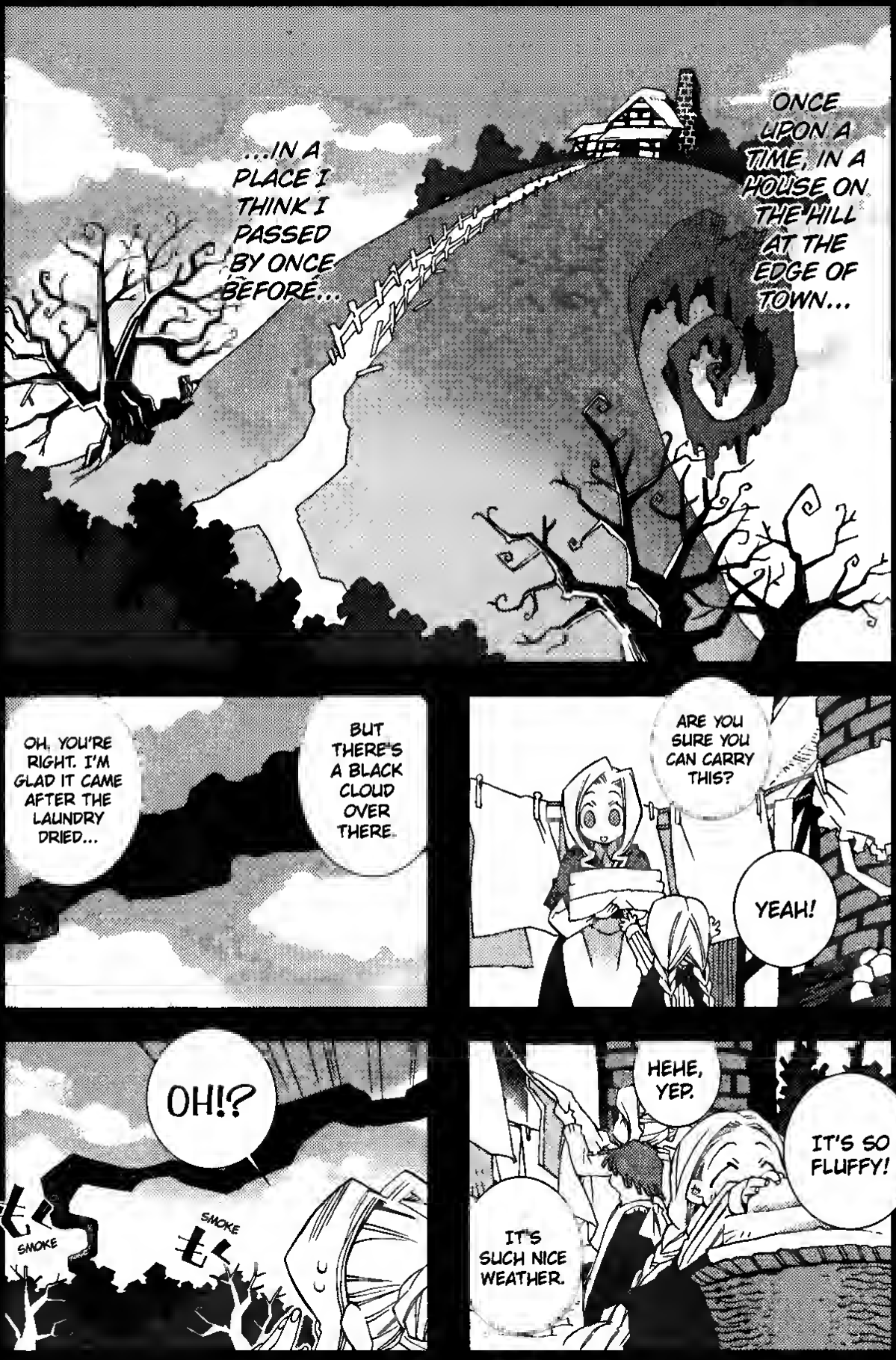

BUT OJII-CHAN...
...WAS IN THE SAME BOX AS THE ONE KURO-CHAN CARRIED AROUND...

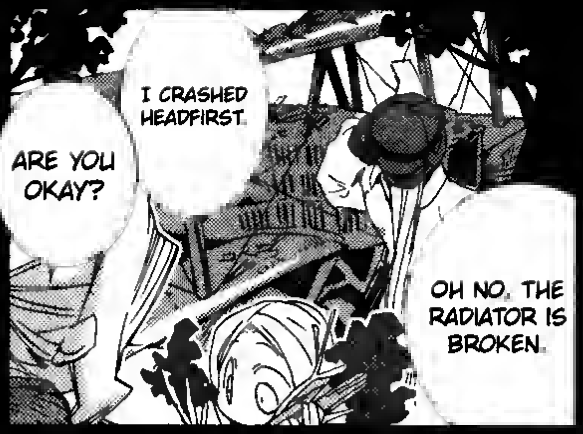
He's not sleeping. He's dead.
KURO-CHAN, WHAT ARE THEY DOING?
WHY IS OJII-CHAN SLEEPING?

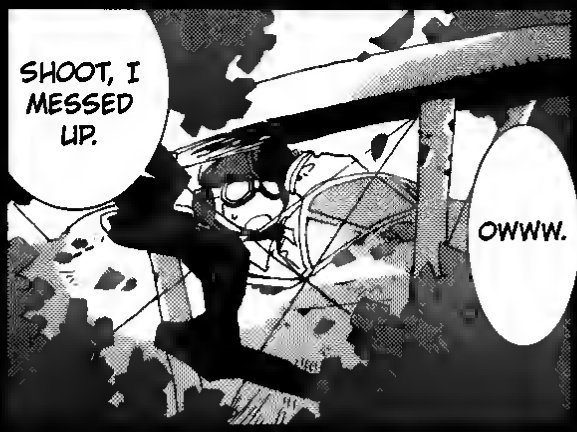

...WAS GOING TO GO ON A JOURNEY LIKE KURO-CHAN, TOO.
...SO WE THOUGHT THAT MUST MEAN THAT OJII-CHAN...

BUT OJII-CHAN IS THERE.
It means that he's gone.
DEAD?

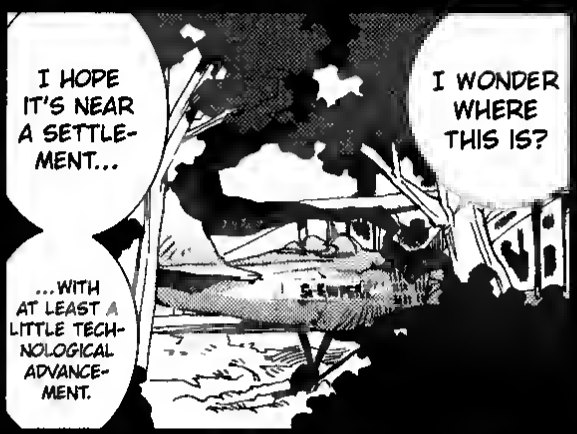
.....
YES?
OH, SORRY. I COULDN'T HELP BUT NOTICE...
...YOU'RE CARRYING A VERY PECULIAR THING.
YEAH. I GET THAT A LOT.
WHY?
.....
BE-CAUSE I NEED IT.
?
WHAT IS IT, SEN?
SO THAT'S AN AIR-PLANE?
WOW... I'M SEEING ONE FOR THE FIRST TIME.
HEEHEE, ISN'T IT NICE?
THAT'S ACTU-ALLY MY GRAND-FATHER.
I'M CUR-RENTLY LEARNING TO BECOME A PILOT, TOO.
.....
I SEE...
OH?
ARE YOU... A GIRL?
YEAH. I GET THAT A LOT, TOO.


ONCE UPON A TIME, IN A HOUSE ON THE HILL AT THE EDGE OF TOWN...
...IN A PLACE I THINK I PASSED BY ONCE BEFORE...
ARE YOU SURE YOU CAN CARRY THIS?
YEAH!
BUT THERE'S A BLACK CLOUD OVER THERE.
OH, YOU'RE RIGHT. I'M GLAD IT CAME AFTER THE LAUNDRY DRIED...
HEHE, YEP.
IT'S SO FLUFFY!
IT'S SUCH NICE WEATHER.
OH!?
SMOKE
SMOKE

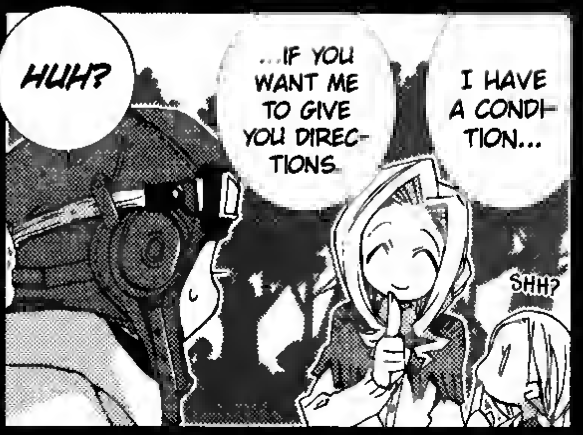

I CRASHED HEADFIRST.
ARE YOU OKAY?
OH NO. THE RADIATOR IS BROKEN.


SHOOT, I MESSED UP.
OWWW.

BY THE WAY, IS THERE A LARGE TOWN NEARBY?
REALLY?
YEAH. IT'S JUST A SCRATCH.
SNIFF

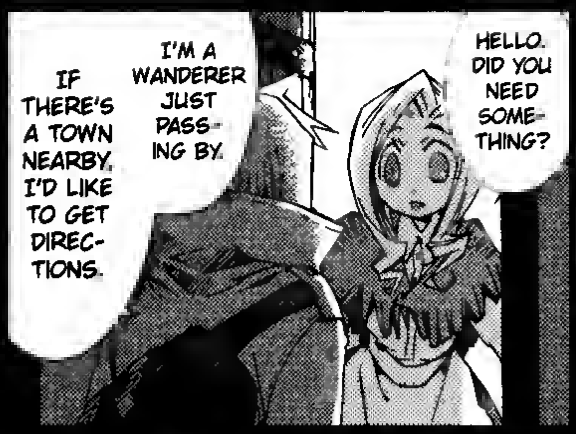

I HOPE IT'S NEAR A SETTLE-MENT...
...WITH AT LEAST A LITTLE TECH-NOLOGICAL ADVANCE-MENT.
I WONDER WHERE THIS IS?

HOLD IT. LET'S SEE.
SHH.
WELL, YOU COULD COME TO WHERE I LIVE...


HUH?
...IF YOU WANT ME TO GIVE YOU DIREC-TIONS.
I HAVE A CONDI-TION...
SHH?

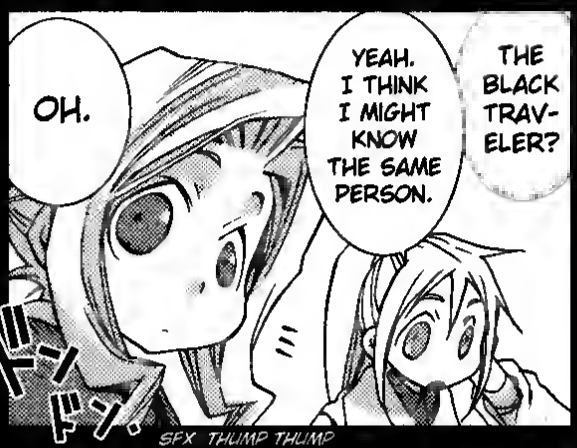
N-N-N-NO, THAT'S NOT IT!!
WE SAW A STRANGE BLACK SMOKE SO WE THOUGHT IT WAS A FIRE AND BROUGHT THESE TO PUT IT OUT
H-H-H-HOLD UP!! I'M INSIDE THIS STEEL BOX, BUT I'M HUMAN, AND A WEAK GIRL TO BOOT!!

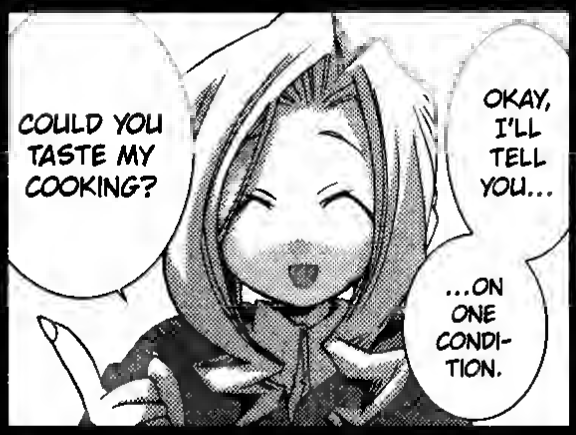
SO YOU DELIVER GOODS USING A PLANE?
YES. BUT IT'S MOSTLY A HOBBY.
I HAVE TO LET YOU TREAT ME TO GET DIRECTIONS?
THERE'S NO POINT IN MAKING MEDICINE IF NO ONE USES IT.
WON'T YOU PLEASE STAY THE NIGHT?
THEN I'LL STAY TOO.
WHY DID YOU GET INTO AN ACCIDENT?
I JUST FINISHED A JOB...
...AND THE LADY THERE GAVE ME SOME CANDY.
SHE WAS WEIRD.
SHE'S A WITCH!
EH!? A WITCH!?
SHE CURED MY SICKNESS BEFORE TOO.
BUT SHE HAS NO BROOM.
I HAD IT IN MY POCKET, BUT THEN I WAS ABOUT TO DROP IT, SO...
OH MY
WHAT A CUTE REASON.
I WONDER IF A SHOP OWNER SHOULD GIVE OUT CANDY THAT FREELY?
LET'S EAT IT TOGETHER
CHUCKLE
DID SHE PUT YOU IN A BOILING CAULDRON?
NO.
BUT IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE I HAD A GUEST...
EVER SINCE THAT TRAVELER IN BLACK.
HOW ABOUT POISON APPLES?
NO.
ACHOO!!
HM? ARE YOU CATCHING A COLD?
CHOO!
ACHOO!
YOU GUYS ARE SNEEZING WHILE SCARFING DOWN CANDY?

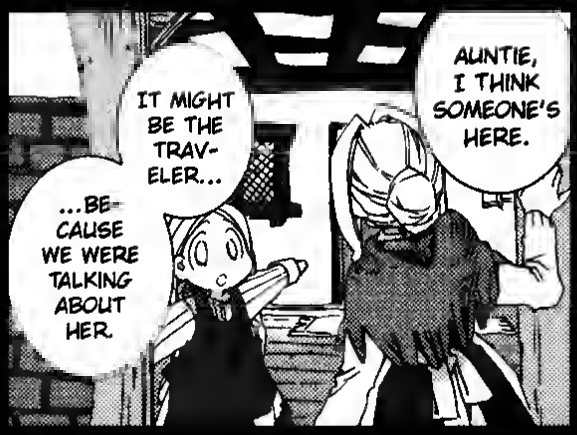

HELLO. DID YOU NEED SOMETHING?
I'M A WANDERER JUST PASSING BY.
IF THERE'S A TOWN NEARBY, I'D LIKE TO GET DIRECTIONS.

I FEEL BAD FOR MAKING YOU HELP WITH DINNER.
AHAHA! IT'S OKAY, IT'S OKAY.
BUT ABOUT THAT PERSON DRESSED IN BLACK...

OH MY.
IT'S OKAY. I ALWAYS DO THIS.
IT'S DANGEROUS IN THE DARK, SO YOU SHOULD STAY THE NIGHT.
PLEASE JUST GIVE ME THE DIRECTIONS.


OH.
YEAH. I THINK I MIGHT KNOW THE SAME PERSON.
THE BLACK TRAVELER?
ドン ドン
SFX THUMP THUMP


COULD YOU TASTE MY COOKING?
OKAY, I'LL TELL YOU...
...ON ONE CONDITION.

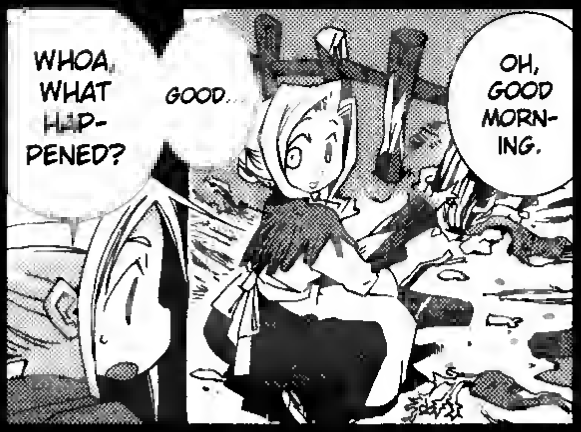

AUNTIE, I THINK SOMEONE'S HERE.
IT MIGHT BE THE TRAVELER...
...BECAUSE WE WERE TALKING ABOUT HER.

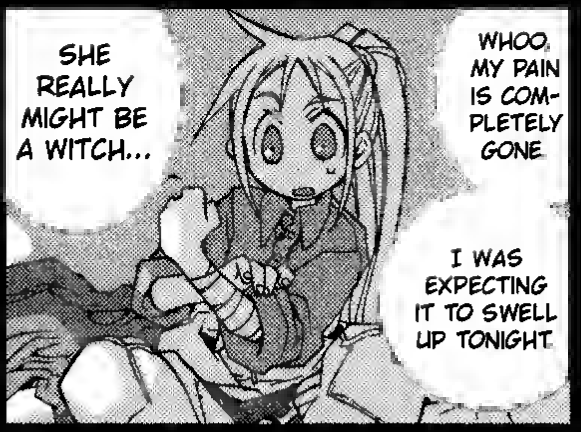
SHE'S GOOD...
OTHERWISE, I CAN'T GIVE YOU DIRECTIONS.
EH?
WHA ...!?
IT'S A RECIPE I GOT FROM A FRIEND, BUT I'M WORRIED HOW IT CAME OUT...
...AND I WANT SOMEONE TO TASTE IT.

WHO...
ガッキャ
SFX CLACK

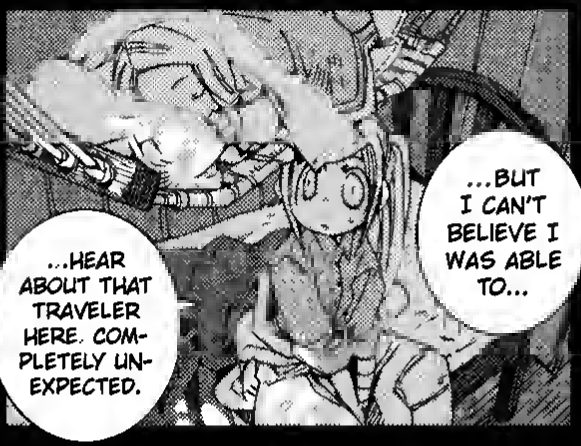
IT MIGHT BE A DIFFERENT PERSON, BUT I DO KNOW SOMEONE LIKE THAT.
OH! THAT'S RIGHT.
BY THE WAY, DO YOU KNOW THE BLACK TRAVELER, TOO?
HOLD IT. IT'S A BUNCH OF GIRLS AND KIDS!!
GEH!
PLEASE MAKE YOURSELF COMFORTABLE WHILE YOU WAIT.
IT'S JUST THAT THE TRAVELER DOESN'T HAVE MANY SOCIAL SKILLS, SO I'M A LITTLE CONCERNED.
THE TRAVELER WORE BLACK CLOTHES AND A HAT AND CARRIED SOME BIG LUGGAGE, AND THERE WERE TWO OF THEM.
I CAN'T SAY ANYTHING. I'M A VISITOR, TOO.
NO...
ARE YOU CARELESS OR IGNORANT?
AND YET YOU LET A SUSPICIOUS WANDERER IN?
IT'S JUST THAT THE TRAVELER'S APPEARANCE GETS HER INTO TROUBLE.
NO, IT'S NOT LIKE THAT.
OOH!
IS ONE OF THE TRAVELERS YOUR LOVER?
DON'T WORRY. THAT WITCH IS PRETTY NICE.
NOW I GET IT!!
OH, I SEE. WE'RE THE ONES WHO'RE GONNA BE EATEN.
IT'S OKAY. SHE'S A WITCH.
THEY'RE NOT FUGITIVES, EITHER!!
OH, MY!
DOESN'T THAT MEAN ONE OF THEM IS A FELON?
I KNEW THAT YOU WERE HELPING ME COOK TO SEE IF I WAS POISONING THE DINNER.
OF COURSE.
BUT SHE'S A WITCH, SO IF YOU TRY TO SNEAK OUT, SHE MIGHT BE ABLE TO SEE IT.

AND WHAT ABOUT THE TRAVELER YOU KNOW?
HEHEHE. LET'S SEE...
OH! WHAT KIND OF A TRAVELER WAS IT?
HUH? YOU TOO?
I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S THE SAME PERSON, BUT I KNOW A BLACK TRAVELER TOO.
THEY HELPED ME WHEN I WAS IN A TOUGH SITUATION.
THE ONE I KNOW IS A LITTLE CLUMSY AND CUTE.
OH, AND SHE LEFT ME A LITTLE HAPPINESS.
THAT PERSON WAS TRAVELING WITH CHILDREN?
A GUY?
THE ONE I SAW WAS A GUY NAMED KURO WITH TWO KIDS.
I USED TO LIVE HERE ALL ALONE FOR A LONG TIME.
BUT EVER SINCE SHE STOPPED BY, MY LIFE HAS CHANGED A LITTLE.
IF IT'S HIM, I'D LIKE TO RUN INTO HIM AGAIN...
...ESPECIALLY WHEN I'M IN NEED.
HE LOOKS ECCENTRIC AND SEEMS TO REJECT PEOPLE, BUT IN REALITY HE'S TOO NICE AND EASY TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF.
SO JUST LIKE THAT...
...I'M SURE SHE'S GOING ABOUT HER JOURNEY, LEAVING LITTLE FOOTSTEPS HERE AND THERE.
HOW ODD. I'M NEXT TO THE HEAT, BUT I'M GETTING CHILLS.
Maybe you should go to bed early.
SFX: CRACK


WHOA, WHAT HAP-PENED?
GOOD...
OH, GOOD MORN-ING.

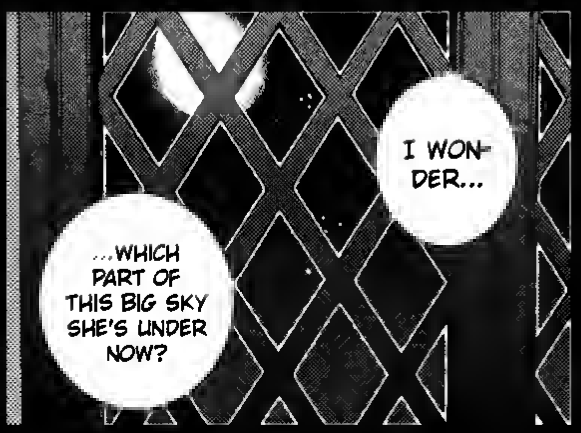

SHE REALLY MIGHT BE A WITCH...
WHOO. MY PAIN IS COM-PLETELY GONE
I WAS EXPECTING IT TO SWELL UP TONIGHT

EEH!?
IT'S COMMON DURING THIS TIME OF THE YEAR, BUT THE ANIMALS FROM THE FOREST COME HERE FOR FOOD
MAYBE I DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH REPELLENT TO KEEP THEM AWAY LAST NIGHT.


...BUT I CAN'T BELIEVE I WAS ABLE TO...
...HEAR ABOUT THAT TRAVELER HERE. COM-PLETELY UN-EXPECTED.

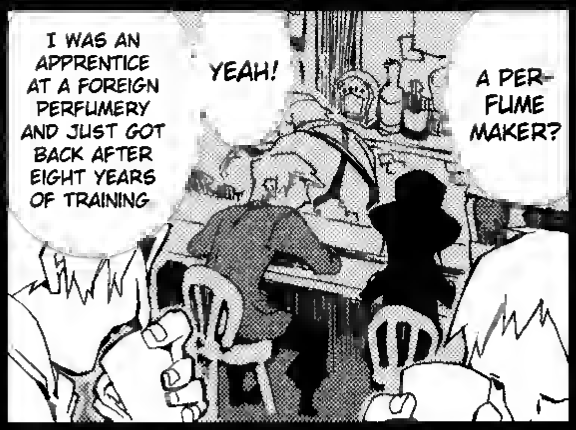
SO LAST NIGHT...
...YOU STOPPED US FROM HEADING TO TOWN BE-CAUSE OF THIS?

NO. I WAS JUST HAPPY TO HAVE GUESTS FOR A CHANGE.


I WON-DER...
...WHICH PART OF THIS BIG SKY SHE'S UNDER NOW?

HEEHEE, THAT WAS FUN.
MAYBE...
...THE TRAVELER WAS BEHIND ALL THIS?
I GUESS SO.
OH! THEN ME TOO!
YOU TRY TO RUN AND CATCH UP.
I CAN GIVE YOU DIRECTIONS!
SO CAN I RIDE IN THAT?
HM? SURE.
IF YOU EVER SEE THE BLACK TRAVELER AGAIN, I WANT YOU TO GIVE HER THIS.
OH, WAIT. CAN I ASK YOU TO DELIVER SOMETHING?
YEAH, KIND OF.
I WAS REMEMBERING THE PEOPLE I MET ON MY JOURNEY.
IS THERE SOMETHING IN THE SKY?
WHAT'S UP, KURO-CHAN?
THAT'S FINE.
AND I DON'T KNOW IF I'LL SEE HER.
OH, BUT IT MIGHT NOT BE THE SAME PERSON...
...SOMEWHERE UNDER THIS SKY AS WELL.
RIGHT NOW, THEY'RE...
I'LL LEAVE THAT UP TO YOU.
I MIGHT EAT IT...
I DON'T KNOW IF THE SNACKS WILL HOLD UNTIL I MEET HER AGAIN.
GROWL
WE'RE GOING!
HOW DID YOU KNOW WHAT IT WAS?

...A BAR IN A CERTAIN PLACE.
THIS IS...
YOU'VE GOT A COFFIN, AND YOU'RE NOT EVEN DRINKING.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN A BAR?
A COFFIN!?
WHOA, WHAT THE HECK?
SQUEAL
SQUEAL
I'M HERE TO ACCOMPANY MY FRIEND.
I SEE. A JOURNEY.
SHE'S IN THE MIDDLE OF A JOURNEY, SHE SAYS.


I WAS AN APPRENTICE AT A FOREIGN PERFUMERY AND JUST GOT BACK AFTER EIGHT YEARS OF TRAINING
YEAH!
A PERFUME MAKER?

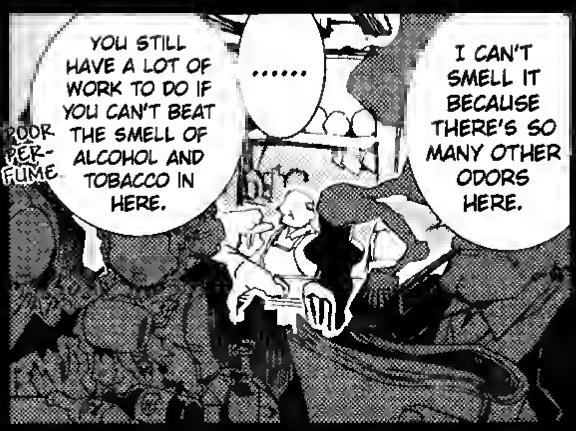
YEAH. STAY HOME.
WE HAVE TO STAY HOME.

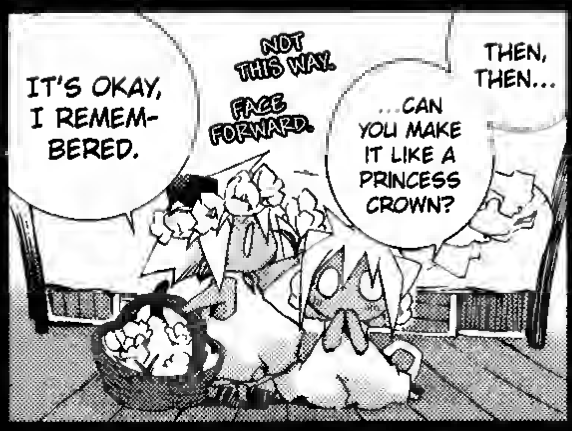
PLEASE GO AWAY.
SO I DREW ON MY MEMORIES OF MY HOMETOWN AND MADE THIS PERFUME.
I WAS TOLD THAT EXPRESSING YOUR IMAGINATION IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN HOW GOOD YOUR NOSE IS.

KUROCHA MADE IT FOR ME.
A FLOWER CROWN.
WHAT'S THAT ON YOUR HEAD?

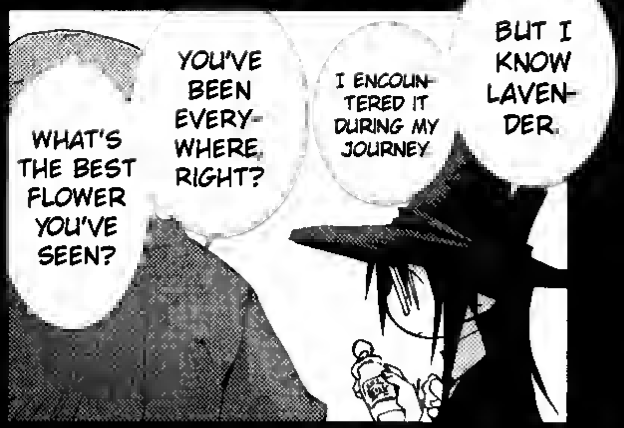
THIS LAVENDER PERFUME WILL BECOME FAMOUS ONE DAY.
WELL, TEST IT OUT.

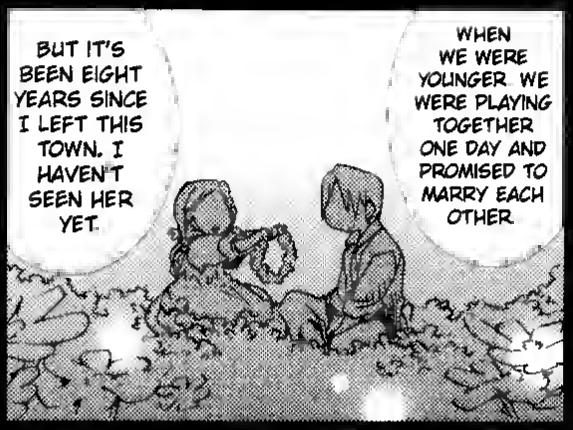
I'LL MAKE ONE FOR YOU.
NOT THIS ONE.
HOW NICE. I WANT ONE TOO.
REALLY?


POOR PERFUME
YOU STILL HAVE A LOT OF WORK TO DO IF YOU CAN'T BEAT THE SMELL OF ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO IN HERE.
.....
I CAN'T SMELL IT BECAUSE THERE'S SO MANY OTHER ODORS HERE.

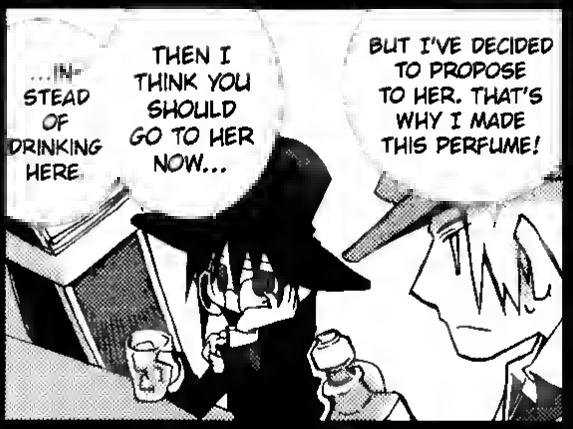

IT'S OKAY, I REMEMBERED.
NOT THIS WAY.
FACE FORWARD.
THEN, THEN...
...CAN YOU MAKE IT LIKE A PRINCESS CROWN?

WELL, ACTUALLY...
...SMILAX IS MY CHILDHOOD FRIEND AND MY FIRST LOVE.


WHAT'S THE BEST FLOWER YOU'VE SEEN?
YOU'VE BEEN EVERYWHERE, RIGHT?
I ENCOUNTERED IT DURING MY JOURNEY.
BUT I KNOW LAVENDER.


BUT IT'S BEEN EIGHT YEARS SINCE I LEFT THIS TOWN. I HAVEN'T SEEN HER YET.
WHEN WE WERE YOUNGER, WE WERE PLAYING TOGETHER ONE DAY AND PROMISED TO MARRY EACH OTHER.

I SEE.
I SAW A SHINING FLOWER ONCE.
THERE WERE MANY.


...INSTEAD OF DRINKING HERE.
THEN I THINK YOU SHOULD GO TO HER NOW...
BUT I'VE DECIDED TO PROPOSE TO HER. THAT'S WHY I MADE THIS PERFUME!

...IS THE FLOWER-SELLER SMILAX.
BUT, TO ME, THE FAIREST FLOWER...

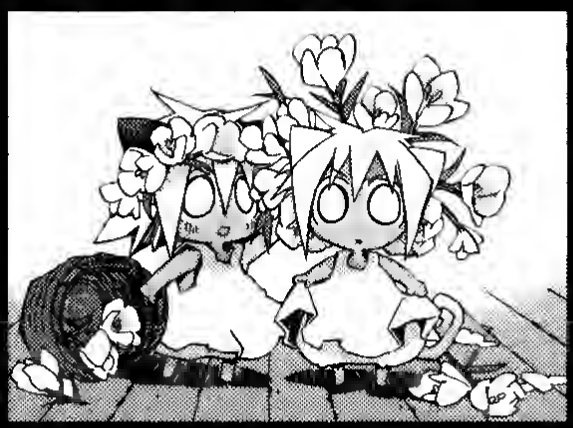
AT LEAST IT'S ONLY ORANGE JUICE.
YOU'RE MAKING MY DRINK TASTE BAD.
THE PAST EIGHT YEARS ARE WEIGHING ME DOWN.
I CAN'T MUSTER THE COURAGE.

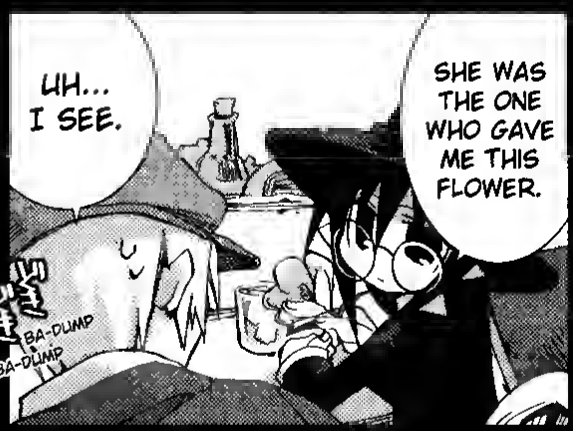
BUT PLEASE LISTEN TO MY STORY.
OH, SORRY! I'M SORRY.
I'M WASTING MY TIME.
FIRST YOUR JOB, AND NOW YOU'RE BRAGGING ABOUT YOUR GIRLFRIEND?
I'LL BUY YOU A DRINK.
CLATTER

NOW I GET IT.
?
OH, I SEE.

ALL DONE!
HOW DO YOU LIKE IT?

SMILAX IS ALWAYS SELLING THERE.
IS THAT THE LADY SELLING FLOWERS ON THE MAIN STREET?




UH... I SEE.
SHE WAS THE ONE WHO GAVE ME THIS FLOWER.
BA-DUMP
BA-DUMP

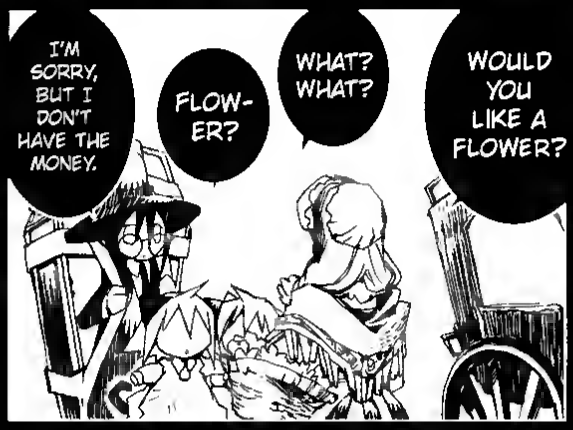
STOMP

ARE YOU PITYING ME!?
I DON'T NEED IT!!
HERE.

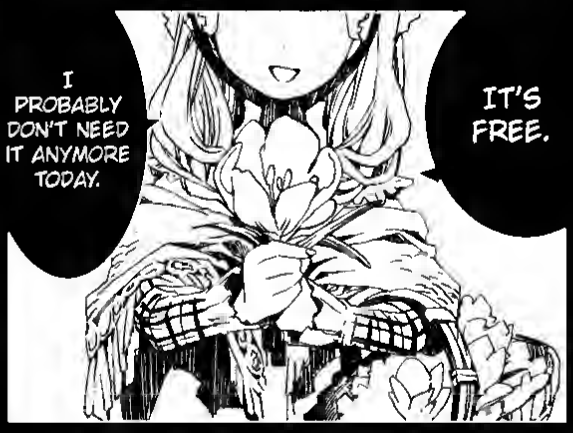
NO... BUT...
???
SO I'M GIVING IT TO YOU.
THAT'S THE STORY.

UM...
NO, BANDAGES.
CANDY?
WHAT DID YOU BUY?

YOU DON'T SEE WHY SHE GAVE IT TO ME, A TRAVELER?
YOU DON'T GET IT?


I'M SORRY, BUT I DON'T HAVE THE MONEY.
FLOWER?
WHAT? WHAT?
WOULD YOU LIKE A FLOWER?

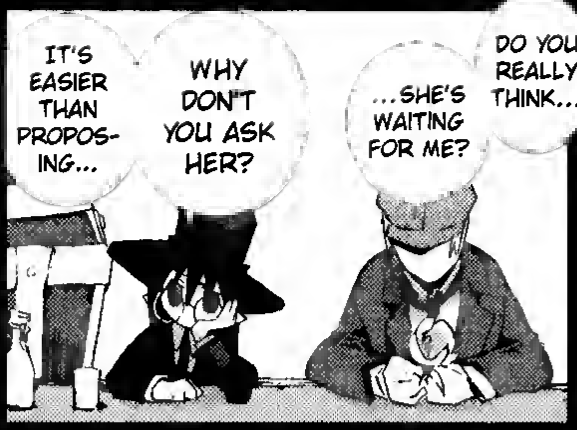
...THAT MAYBE I COULD DELIVER IT TO A CERTAIN PERSON FAR AWAY.
SHE PROBABLY MADE A WISH...


I PROBABLY DON'T NEED IT ANYMORE TODAY.
IT'S FREE.

...MEANS "I'M WAITING FOR YOU."
IN THE LANGUAGE OF FLOWERS, A CROCUS...

SO AT THE VERY LEAST, I WANTED TO GIVE IT TO A TRAVELER WHO CAN FREELY GO ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD.
JUST LIKE THIS FLOWER, I CAN ONLY WAIT HERE.

KURO-CHA'S CROWN IS MESSED UP TOO.
YEAH.
THE FLOW-ERS GOT MESSY.


IT'S EASIER THAN PROPOS-ING...
WHY DON'T YOU ASK HER?
...SHE'S WAITING FOR ME?
DO YOU REALLY THINK...

LIKE A PRINCESS?
BUT LOOK, IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE WEARING FLOWERS.
YEAH. A PRINCESS FROM THE LAND OF FLOWERS.

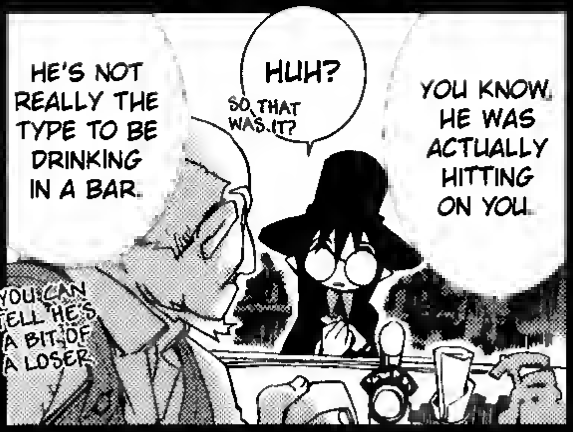
IT'S MADE SO THAT YOU CAN SMELL ITS TRUE SCENT AFTER SOME TIME HAS PASSED.
HUH? IT MUST BE THE PERFUME.
I JUST SMELLED SOME-THING.
I SEE.

NIJUKU SMELLS LIKE FLOWERS TOO.
YEAH.
I COULD SMELL FLOWERS FROM YOU.

LAVENDER, IN THE LANGUAGE OF FLOW-ERS...
...MEANS THE SAME THING, DOESN'T IT?

.....
KURO-CHA IS LATE.
YEAH.
I HOPE KURO-CHAN COMES HOME SOON.

IT'S A REALLY GENTLE SCENT.
YEAH.


HE'S NOT REALLY THE TYPE TO BE DRINKING IN A BAR.
HUH?
SO THAT WAS IT?
YOU KNOW, HE WAS ACTUALLY HITTING ON YOU.
YOU CAN TELL HE'S A BIT OF A LOSER.

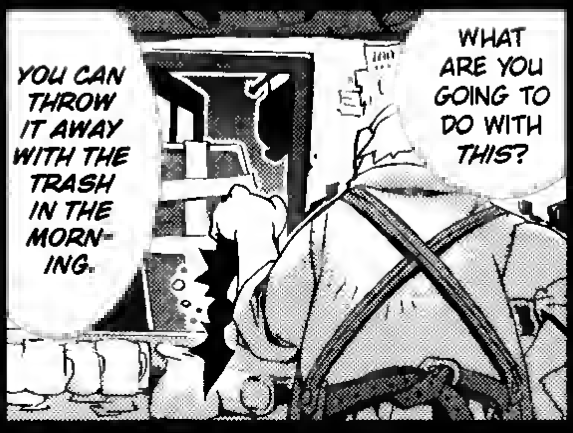
HUH!?
I'LL GIVE YOU THIS PERFUME.

YOU CAN ACTUALLY TELL THAT SMILAX IS A GIRL.
NOT AT ALL.
WAS I REALLY SIMILAR TO THE GIRL?
THAT'S TRUE.

I WANT YOU TO KEEP IT.
IT'S OKAY.
I THOUGHT THIS WAS FOR HER.

YEAH.
WELL, I'M GOING TOO.
THANKS FOR THE DRINK.

...BECAUSE YOU LOOK A LITTLE BIT LIKE HER.
I KNOW IT'S KIND OF LATE TO SAY THIS, BUT I CAME UP TO YOU...


YOU CAN THROW IT AWAY WITH THE TRASH IN THE MORNING.
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH THIS?

IT WOULD BE A SHAME IF YOU BECAME A COFFIN-CARRYING GRANNY.
SO YOU SHOULD WEAR THAT AND BE MORE LADYLIKE.

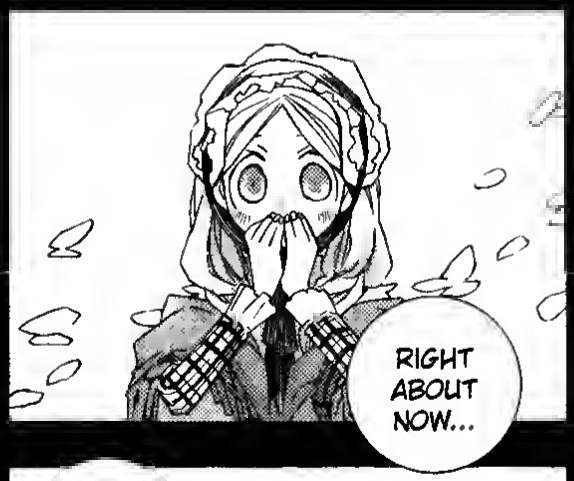
NO, SHE WAS DIFFERENT FROM KURO-CHA.
COMPLETELY DIFFERENT.
BY THE WAY...
...DO YOU THINK I LOOK LIKE THE FLOWER GIRL?

WE WERE WAITING FOR KURO-CHAN.
KURO-CHA TOOK TOO LONG COMING HOME.
AND WHEN I COME HOME, THE PLACE IS SWIMMING WITH FLOWER PETALS.
RIGHT?
RIGHT?

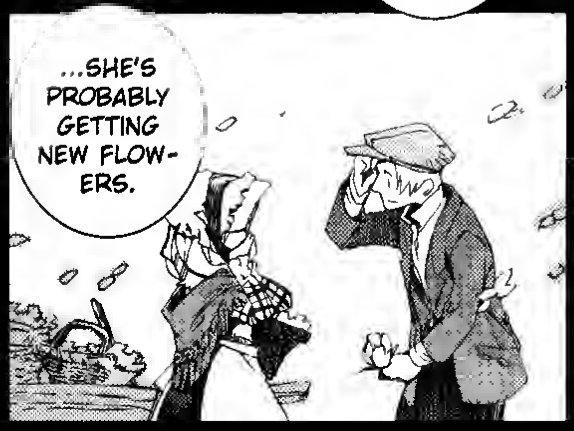
Well, now that you mention it, maybe.
I'M SURE THAT'S TRUE.
WOBBLE

IS SHE GIVING OUT FLOWERS TODAY TOO?
THE LADY WHO GAVE US FLOWERS YESTERDAY.
NO.

HOW... Well, um...
.....
HOW?
HUH?
DON'T SHOUT. IT HURTS.


RIGHT ABOUT NOW...

WE CAN'T TELL.
When they smile, they really look alike.
WE'VE NEVER SEEN KURO-CHA SMILE.

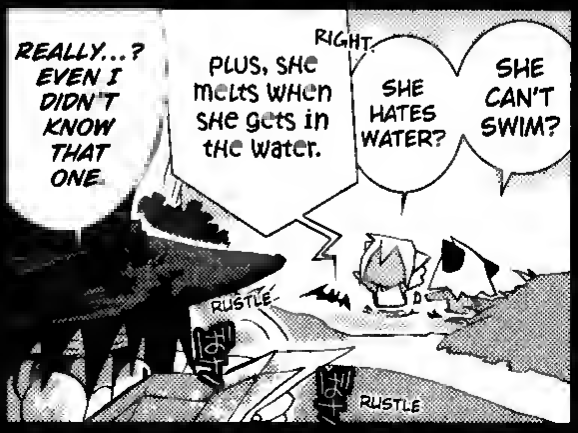

...SHE'S PROBABLY GETTING NEW FLOWERS.

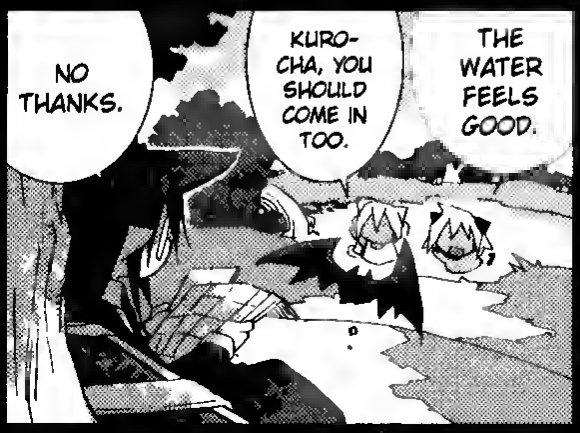
WHAT?
...HAS A STORY BEHIND IT.
WHAT? WHAT?
THIS FLOWER...
THE GIRL...
...CRIED EVERY DAY FROM GRIEF.
BUT THEY WERE FORBIDDEN TO GET MARRIED...
...SO THE MAN KILLED HIMSELF OUT OF DESPAIR.
...WHO FELL IN LOVE WITH A SHEPHERD'S DAUGHTER.
THERE USED TO BE A HANDSOME MAN...
...AND CHANGED THE MAN TO CROCUS AND THE GIRL TO SMILAX.
A FLOWER GODDESS TOOK PITY ON THEM...
Don't you have a hangover?
I DIDN'T DRINK ALCOHOL.
I'M UNDERAGE, AFTER ALL.
THAT SO?
One country uses those flowers in weddings.
SHOOT, I can't think straight.
WHAT'S THAT?
Let's see, where was that?
WEDDING?
WHICH COUNTRY?

WELL, THEY DON'T HAVE FAMILY, SO YES.
ARE YOU TRAVELING WITH THOSE TWO?
CAN YOU WRITE THE DIRECTIONS HERE?
I DON'T KNOW WHY MEN LIKE TO DO THAT STUFF.
DURING THE SUMMER, HE SENDS ME LETTERS FROM VARIOUS PLACES.
MY LITTLE BROTHER IS A WANDERER TOO.
IF YOU CAN INDICATE ANY LANDMARKS, THAT WOULD HELP.
...BUT DON'T YOU THINK THOSE KIDS ARE TOO YOUNG TO BE TRAVELING?
WELL, I DON'T KNOW YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES...
LIVING IN VARIOUS PLACES WITH NO PLACE TO CALL HOME.
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR US LADIES.
THANK YOU.
TAKE CARE.
ESPECIALLY SINCE IT'S GETTING WINDIER.
YES, THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
IS THIS OKAY?

WHY?
UH, THAT'S 'COS... UMM...
SHE'D NEVER GO IN.
IT'S NOT FUN IF KURO-CHA'S NOT COMING.

THAT'S RIGHT.
SLUMP
Man... it's so hot today.


REALLY...? EVEN I DIDN'T KNOW THAT ONE.
PLUS, SHE MELTS WHEN SHE GETS IN THE WATER.
RIGHT.
SHE HATES WATER?
SHE CAN'T SWIM?
RUSTLE
RUSTLE


NO THANKS.
KURO-CHA, YOU SHOULD COME IN TOO.
THE WATER FEELS GOOD.

WE DID TEN HOW MANY TIMES?
NINE... TEN...
LET'S SEE.
SPLASH
SPLASH
WHAT? ALREADY?
OKAY, WE'RE GOING NOW. COME ON OUT.
ONE... TWO...
.....
NINE...
THREE... FOUR...
...TEN.
I'LL WAIT FOR YOU TO COUNT UP TO 100.
OKAY, FINE.
PLEASE, JUST A LITTLE LONGER.
A LITTLE MORE! A LITTLE MORE!
SPLASH
SPLASH
YEAH, WE HAVE TO GO BACK, SHE SAID.
...WHEN IT'S 100.
WE HAVE TO GO BACK...
OH, YOU CAN'T COUNT THAT FAR?
ONE.
HOW MUCH IS 100?
THEN MAYBE THEY HAVE TO KEEP TRYING UNTIL THEY CAN COUNT TO 100.
YOU ONLY COUNTED THAT MUCH.
YEAH!
BUT! I ONLY COUNTED THIS MUCH!
COUNT TO TEN, TEN TIMES.
BOTH ARE BAD NUMBERS.
HOW MANY NIJUKU?
HOW MANY SANJU DO YOU NEED TO GET 100?

HE'S NOT GOOD IN STRONG SUNLIGHT.
HE'S SLEEPING INSIDE
SEN'S GONE?
WHERE'S SEN?

...Hey.

YEAH, CAN'T WALK.
WE CAN'T WALK.
EH? WHAT'S WRONG?
SLUMP

I'm sure they've already passed 100.
Aren't they taking too long?
IT'S HOT.

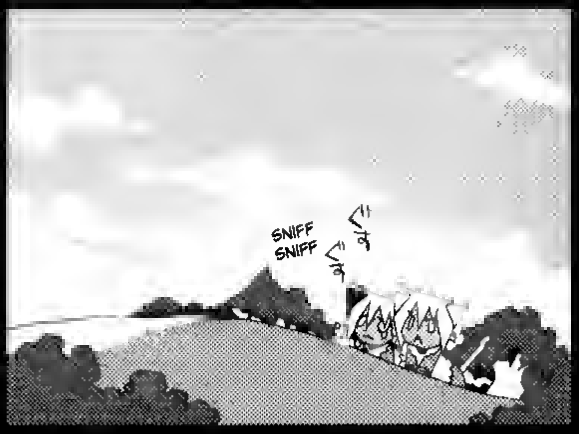
YOU'RE JUST TIRED FROM PLAY-ING IN THE WATER.
WE DON'T LIKE THE SUNLIGHT.
WE'RE REALLY WEAK.

They're cheating because they want to play more.
It's obvious.
REALLY?

NO.
UNTIL WE COUNT TO 100.
WE CAN REST A LITTLE, RIGHT?

.....
KUTO?

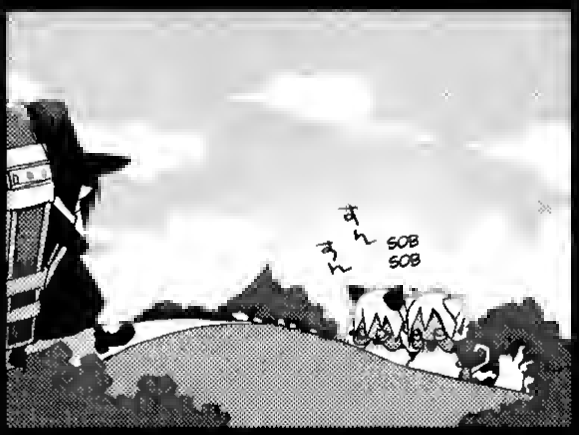
I WANT TO REACH THE TOWN BEFORE SUNSET.
YOU CAN HANG IN A LITTLE LONGER RIGHT?
HOW MUCH IS "A LITTLE LONGER"?
.....!
GASP
KURO-CHAN ALWAYS SAYS "A LITTLE MORE."
SO HOW COME WE CAN'T SAY IT?
TH-
YEAH!
WE HATE MEANIE KURO-CHAN!!
THEN WE DON'T LIKE YOU EITHER!
IT'S NOT FAIR THAT SEN GETS TO REST!
IT'S NOT FAIR THAT KURO-CHA'S NOT COUNTING TO 100!
ANGRY
.....
THAT'S ENOUGH!!
I HATE SELFISH KIDS!!


SNIFF
SNIFF

THEN STAY THERE ALL YOU WANT.
...FINE.

KURO-CHA

I'M GOING AHEAD.


SOB
SOB

NO!!
SANJU...

IT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE I'M GETTING CLOSE TO THE TOWN EITHER.
IT'S HEAVY... MY FEET ARE HEAVY.
IT SUDDENLY GOT REALLY HEAVY...
...ON THIS JOURNEY?
DAMMIT. WHY AM I...
DID BOTH OF THEM FALL ASLEEP?
THEY'RE SO SELFISH.
I DON'T THINK OF ANYTHING DECENT WHEN I'M ALONE.
.....
STOP.
... I WALKED WITHOUT TALKING TO ANYONE.
IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE...
I SHOULD'VE CHANGED MY BANDAGES AFTER ALL.
I DON'T FEEL SO GOOD...
...IF I HAD LEFT THEM BEHIND.
I WONDER WHAT WOULD'VE HAPPENED TO THESE TWO...

THUMP
NIJUKU, SANJU. WAKE UP.
WE'RE HERE AT THE SET-TLEMENT.
KURO-CHAN!
.....
KURO-CHAN, THIS ISN'T THE TOWN?
AL-READY?
KURO-CHAN IS STILL MAD.
IT'S YOUR FAULT...
...BECAUSE SANJU WAS STUBBORN AND MAD.
OKAY!
SANJU, GO GET SOMEONE!!
I DIDN'T CRY!
...BECAUSE YOU'RE A CRYBABY.
NO. IT'S NIJUKU'S FAULT...

SANJU! SANJU!
I GOT WATER.
SHE SHOULD REST IN THE BARN FOR A WHILE.
SHE PROBABLY HAS HEAT STROKE.
NIJUKU! NIJUKU!
IF SHE SUFFERS, LOOSEN HER CLOTHES.
I'LL GO GET SOME WATER.
LOOK, NIJUKU.
WHAT IS IT?
OKAY.
NIJUKU, CAN YOU GET THE WATER?
I'LL STAY WITH KURO-CHAN.
...IS A LITTLE WEIRD.
KURO-CHAN'S INSIDE...
WHUMP
WHUMP

SOME-
THING'S
NOT
RIGHT...
I DON'T
KNOW.
WHAT'S
THAT
WHITE
TAPE?

MMN...
.....

.....

!!
...EH?
WHERE
AM
I...?

NO
THANKS.
KURO-
CHA, YOU
SHOULD
COME IN,
TOO.
THE
WATER
FEELS
GOOD.

UH,
CAN
YOU...
...FIRST
GET ME
OUT FROM
UNDER
THIS PILE
OF LOGS?
YOU
WOKE
UP!
KURO-
CHAN!!

...IS
COM-
PLETELY
BLACK.
KURO-
CHA'S
BODY...

I SEE.
THAT'S WHY YOU WERE WORRIED.

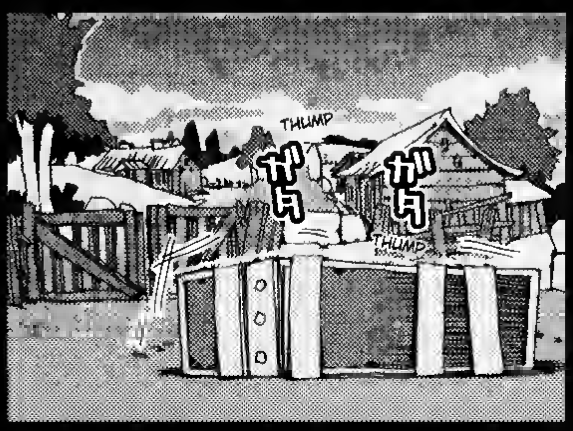
WE WERE COUNT-ING...
WHY LOGS?
...UNTIL YOU WOKE UP.
OWW...

BUT WE'RE MAK-ING UP, RIGHT?
YEAH.
I'M SORRY.
WE WERE FIGHTING TOO.

BUT KURO-CHAN DIDN'T WAKE UP.
WE COUNTED TO 100.
WE COUNTED MANY TIMES.
NO CHEAT-ING THIS TIME.

AND THERE WAS SOMEONE WHO LET US STAY HERE.
YEAH!
YEAH. BOTH OF YOU WORKED HARD, RIGHT?
AND ALSO...

.....!
WE WERE WORRIED YOU WOULDN'T WAKE UP...
...BECAUSE SANJU WAS SELFISH.


THUMP
ガタ
ガタ
THUMP

.....
NO, I WASN'T!
NIJUKU WAS SELF-ISH TOO.

YEAH, SHE DIDN'T.
KURO-CHAN DIDN'T ASK ANYTHING.

THAT'S WHY YOU WERE SO IRRITABLE.
YEAH. IT WAS JUST THE HEAT.
IS YOUR BODY OKAY?

NOW THAT WE THINK ABOUT IT...
YEAH.
KURO-CHAN KNOWS AND SHE'S QUIET.
BUT KURO-CHA PROBABLY KNOWS.

OH.
WAS THAT IT?
I'M SURE THOSE TWO WERE IRRITATED FOR THE SAME REASON.

...TO REALIZE LITTLE BY LITTLE...
...WE PROBABLY STARTED...
HEY.

YOU DIDN'T CHANGE YOUR BANDAGES RIGHT?
YOU WANT ME TO STEP OUT?

...AND WHY SHE'S CARRYING A BOX.
WHY DO YOU THINK...
...THE REASON KURO-CHAN IS A TRAVELER...
...KURO-CHA IS TRAVELING?

NO. IT'S OKAY.
THEY'VE BEEN CHANGED ALREADY.

THANK YOU FOR READING *SHOULDER-A-COFFIN KURO*. I WOULD LIKE TO THANK MY EDITOR AND EVERYONE INVOLVED IN MAKING THIS BOOK. I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK THOSE WHO PICKED UP THIS BOOK.

I WOULD BE HAPPY IF I COULD SEE YOU AGAIN IN THE NEXT VOLUME!

SATOKO KIYUDUKI

TRANSLATION NOTES

Page 9
Janken is the Japanese equivalent of rock-paper-scissors. Instead of saying "one, two, three," the Japanese say, "*Jan-ken-pon!*"

Page 12
Onii-san can be used as a polite term for an unrelated younger man who *is* or appears older than the speaker.

Page 34
Nijuku and *Sanju* are shortened terms for the numbers "twenty-nine" (*nijuuku*) and "thirty" (*sanjuu*) in Japanese.

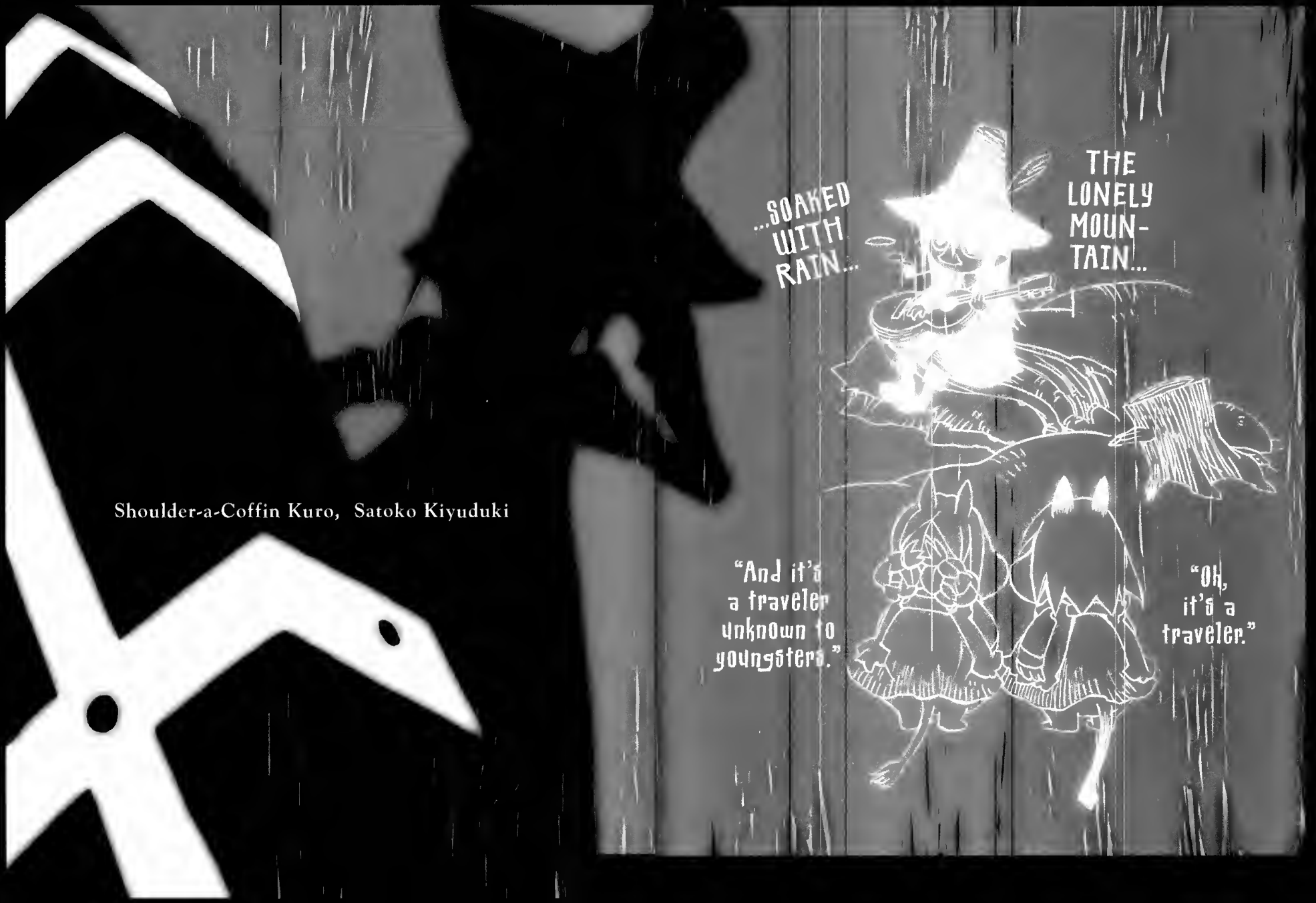
Page 35
Kuro means "black" in Japanese.

Page 75
Sir Munchausen refers to Baron Munchausen (1720-1797), a German baron who was infamous for his tall tales.

Page 77
Tadaima is short for *tadaima modorimashita*, which translates as "I'm home." *Okaeri* is short for *okaerinasai* which translates as "Welcome back."

Page 77
Ojii-chan is an affectionate term for an elderly gentleman.

Page 93
The Japanese have a superstition that when you sneeze, it means that someone is saying something about you. If you sneeze once, someone is saying something good; if you sneeze twice, someone is saying something bad. If you sneeze three times or more, it's just a cold.


Shoulder-a-Coffin Kuro, Satoko Kiyuduki
...SOAKED WITH RAIN...
THE LONELY MOUN-TAIN...
"And it's a traveler unknown to youngsters."
"Oh, it's a traveler."

Shoulder-a-Coffin

KURO

...SPEAK!

SEN is... wall, Sen. Snarky to a fault, but often the volce of reeson.

KURO oftan gats mistaken for a boy throughout her journey. Whila a larga part of this is because of her appaaranca, it also has a lot to do with the way sha talks in Japanase. Kuro always refers to hersalf with masculina pronouns and har speech is oftan mora boylsh than ladylike, just like Kuro herself!

NIJUKU and SANJU, Kuro's adorabla companions, also hava thair own unique way of speaking. Thair dialogua is written entirely in *k*ena, which is mada up of the two most basic writing systems of the Japanasa ianguega. This visual aid goas aven furthar in stressing the pair's innocence and naïveté. Thay also spaak in broken phrases, which we've tried to ratain in this edition. Sinca ona of tha twins childishly refers to Kuro as "Kuro-cha," thay're pretty easy to tell apart. Do you know which is which?

どこまで続いて
どこで終わるかも
わからない道を

ひたすらに
ひたすらに
あるく。

「旅」をすることで
哲学や浪漫 人生の詩を
見出す人も居るけれど

わたしの場合は
こんなことを考えてた
気がする。

「もし
世界が
手のひらくらいの
大きさだったら

きっと旅するのだって
楽だったのに。」

VOLUME 2 PREVIEW

うう〜〜〜
山の朝は
寒っ…
おはよ
セン
よ——
おう——
…ん？

騒がしいね
どうかしたの？
クロ!!
ああいつら
羽!! はねが!!

お前ら
なんかいつもと
ちがってないか？
ちがう？

「はね」？
おや
本当だ
「おや」とか
優雅に受けてる
場合なんか!?

あ そうか
いつもの獣
みたいな耳が
ないか…
ら

でも
初めて二人に
出会った時にも
鼠みたいな
掌ほどの大きさに
なった事があったよ
え？
あ…ああ
そういえば

それどころ
じゃねえ——
!?
？

——で
体が小さく
なったところを
猫にペロリと
食べられたん
だよなー
今のまま
それと
長靴を履いた
おとぎ話だよ。
セツナのトキ
居なかったろう

Kuro's journey continues in SHOULDER-A-COFFIN KURO, Vol. 2!